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THE CATACOMBS OF S. GIOVANNI IN SIRACUSA

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ROMAN AND ITALIAN CATACOMBS

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Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology

ROMAN AND ITALIAN CATACOMBS

Mariarita Sgarlata

THE CATACOMBS OF **SAN GIOVANNI IN SIRACUSA**

First edition revised
by the author

(*Translation by* Gaetano Bevelacqua)

Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology

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Rotunda of the sarcophagi. Overall view

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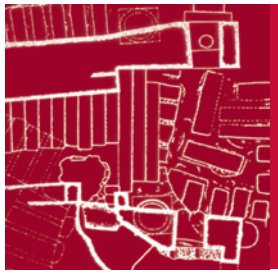


PLACE AND HISTORY

The complex of San Giovanni in Syracuse comprises the catacomb, which is the subject of discussion in this work, the basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista and the crypt of San Marciano. The location in suburban area is justified by the previous funerary destination of the complex, which also makes the side later more suitable to host a martyral sanctuary than the ancient cathedral church of Syracuse, which is mentioned in one of the few surviving sources for the period under examination (4th – 7th century CE), the epistle of the monk Theodosius to the Archdeacon Leo (Pricoco 1988). The studies invite the consideration as to whether the sacred area of a city was the fittest place for a cathedral church (Testini 1987) and, in the case of Syracuse, the choice would suggest an inclination towards the heart of Ortigia, the district where, the most significant buildings of worship have been over the centuries, for the Greek Syracuse. The temple dedicated to Athena in 480 BCE can be remembered among these buildings. It has been turned into a Christian church since the last quarter of the 6th century (Agnello 1990, 67), according to a procedure still tested at the *Apollonion* and other places in Sicily: in Agrigento in the temple of Concordia and, still in the Syracusan territory, in Pachino in the church of S. Lorenzo vecchio and in Eloro in the sanctuary of Demeter (Sgarlata 1998b, 286). Even though the excavations carried out in the *Athenaion* area have revealed several Byzantine burials along the current via Minerva (Orsi 1919, 16-22), signs of the possible early use of the temple as a church before the pontificate of Gregory the Great have never been verified; it is firmly dated to the late 6th century CE, which proves the continuity of its designation both as sacred area (from pagan into Christian) and funerary area (numerous private and community cemeteries are outside the *pomerium* of the city, in the quarter of Acradina).

In terms of the religiosity of the people, it clearly appears that the conversion of the places of worship had served «to erase the cult of demons, but also to replace a pagan festival, which could not be abolished: in that case the Church benefitted from the pre-existent crowd movement» (Pasquato 1981, 209) who also got possession of rituals which did not belong to them, but made relationships with the faithful easier, as it will be possible to check through funerary evidences as well. What has been said hence would dis-

Fig. 1 – Basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista

miss the hypothesis that the basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista **(Fig. 1)**, whose original installation could hypothetically date to the 6th century AD (Agnello 1990a, 21-38), could have served as a cathedral. On the other hand, it is likely that it had been a martyral church, like the crypt of San Marciano and the catacomb of San Giovanni, or a place of pilgrimage, after the cemeteries just mentioned were discarded. The original installation of the basilica (in **Fig. 2** a second plan shows the crypt beneath the basilica), was dated for several decades to the 6th century CE (Agnello 1990, 66: during pope Vigilius' (537-555) stay in Syracuse), has recently been attributed to Norman age (Messina 1995, 20-21), thus also having repercussions for the chronology of the crypt of San Marciano **(Fig. 3)** below the basilica (crypt and basilica already dated to Norman age by Amore 1958, 69-71).

The crypt would certainly merit more than a brief mention, but this work will be limited to recording that the crypt was originally a funerary hypogeum – as attested by the polysome *arcosolia*'s remains and graves cut in the soil still visible in a few sectors of the monument (Orsi 1905, 391-393) – and so could

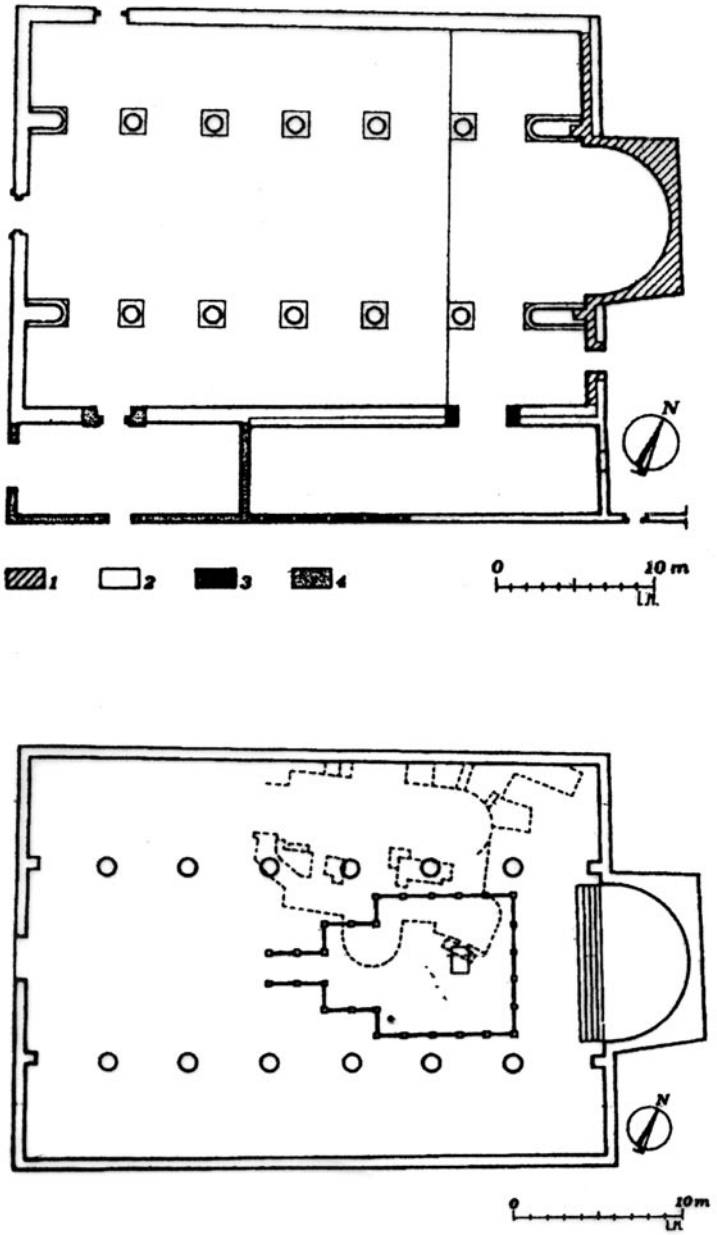


Fig. 2 – Basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista, plants

Fig. 3 – Crypt of San Marciano, from the entrance

Fig. 4 – Crypt of San Marciano, the presumed tomb of the protobishop

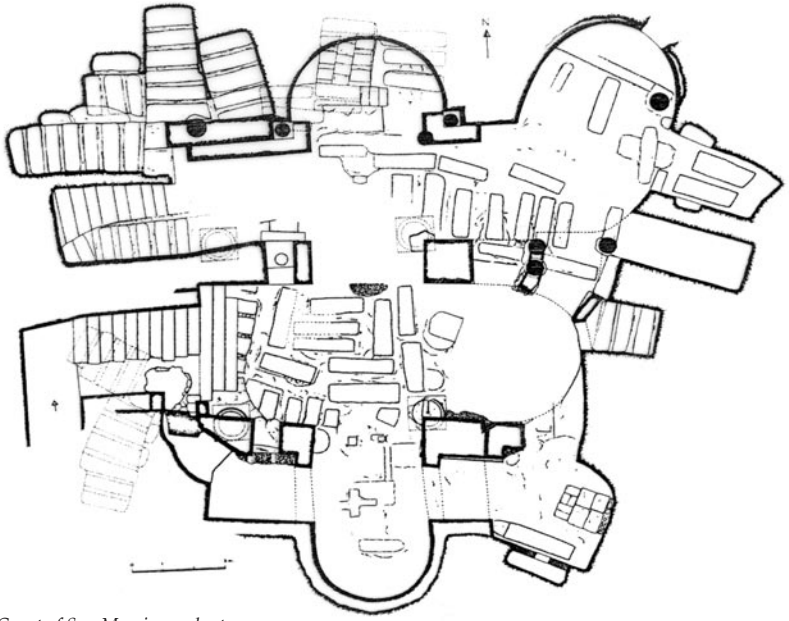


Fig. 5 – Crypt of San Marciano, plant

have held the burial of San Marciano, protobishop of the city, approximately in the middle of the 3rd century **(Fig. 4)** (Agnello 2001, 45). The transformation into *cella trichora,* a crypt with three apses **(Fig. 5)**, clearly related to the presence of the saint's relics, cannot be dated before the first half of the 5th century CE, there vare two funerary testimonies that refer to this: the fresco with the two Alexandras, now lost (Ahlqvist 1995, 190-195), and the inscription bearing the notification of both the consuls of the year 423 (Orsi 1905, 396-397). Also in this case scholars' points of view are diverse: the dominant opinion, shared by Orsi (1905, 401) and both the Agnellos (1968, 19-21 and 1998, 373), ascribes the crypt's first creation to the 6th century AD, making a strict connection between the *memoria* and the church of San Giovanni Evangelista (6th century, asserted by Agnello 1990, 61-63) and dating later modifications to the beginning of the 12th century, during the Norman period of the city; the emerging opinion related to the adjustment into a crypt, in the shape of a *trichora*, to the erection of the overhanging basilica in the Norman age and date the posterior changes to the end of the 14th century (Messina 1995, 22). Technical and stylistic analysis of the crypt's *opus sectile* floor remains **(Fig. 6)** (datable to the end of the 11th or the first decades of the 12th centuries) (Flaminio 1997, 293) could prove the late chronology.

Fig. 6 – Crypt of San Marciano, opus sectile *floor remains*

Whether the former of the two views is accepted or the latter one chosen, a fact is firm and incontrovertible: the difficulty of reading the monument is the result of its long life. The crypt is an architectonic and pictorial palimpsest in which adjustments, transformations and successive changes are not easily decipherable; considering also the common reuse of considerable Mid-Byzantine capitals **(Fig. 7)** (Farioli 1982, 282 and 293, no. 151, figures 216-218) and epigraphic fragments, even the shortest ones, it is not hard to understand how the question could be defined as still open. A significant number of marbles removed from the original hypogeum and the adjacent catacomb of San Giovanni, already at the end of its period of intense exploitation for funerary purpose, had been designed to become reuse material in a martyral context, on which pilgrims would have focused their attention from the 6th century onward.

Suburban cemeteries, fanned out from the area of Fusco, in the quarter of Neapolis, to the Santa Lucia area, in the southern part of Acradina, this indicates unequivocally what the perimeter of the city must have already been in the early and mid Roman Empire **(Plate I)**. The History of the area, which was going to hold the catacombs (San Giovanni, Vigna Cassia and Santa Lucia), spanned the centuries between the classical Greek and late antique ages, gradually giving evidence of quarries (Latomie), water supply systems to the city, characterized by cisterns and aqueducts (Collin Bouffier 1987, 682), handicraft workshops from the beginning of the 4th/3rd century BCE and burials datable to the early and mid Roman Empire. The quarter of Acradina therefore had a different designation and held in part a proper Ceramic, whose workshops, placed along and beyond the eastern bank of the torrent Syraco (Agnello 1978), had been operational at least until Augustan age; in the area several *thysiai* (small pits for *ex-voto* offered by *figuli*, potters) were discovered as well. It is no accident that if hydraulic systems and furnaces have been found inside the three biggest catacombs, even if the dynamics of reuse are not ascribable to the same model, which appears intentional and coincidental by turns. The funerary evidences prior to the creation of monumental community cemeteries – and among these San Giovanni holds a very special position – are columbaria, hypogea of different sizes inserted into the catacombs or isolated from them and *sub divo* burials, all datable to the first three centuries of the Roman Empire, if not beyond, and commissioned by pagans.

Fig. 7 – Crypt of San Marciano, reuse of Mid-Byzantine capital

How can Syracuse be described in late antique age? Undoubtedly as a city that has never changed its shape appreciably from the 2nd century up to the late 7th century, which means that the contraction of Syracuse is a phenomenon that precedes the beginning of Late Antiquity. Two indicators attest that: 1) the continuous use of Acradina as an area for all sorts of cemeteries from the 2nd century until the 6th century (columbaria, 3rd century pagan and Christian hypogea, catacombs, 4th and 5th centuries hypogea and *sub divo* burials); 2) the mending of a road during Constans II's stay in Syracuse (663-668), as suggested by findings of coins (the road had been dug up in the course of excavations conducted by the Soprintendenza BB. CC. AA. in Piazza della Vittoria (Voza 1977, 554-555 and 1999, 93-98). The repairs of an important arterial road, such us the one that joined the two quarters of Acradina and Neapolis and that hypothetically coincides with the *una via lata perpetua* mentioned by Cicero (*Verr. II, 4, 53*), demonstrates that in the second half of the 7th century is still related to the *intra muros* area; they would have hardly restored a road of classical age «had it been totally or partially absorbed into the agricultural land» (Agnello 1990, 53-54).

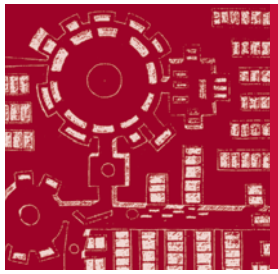
Both inside and outside the walls it clearly appears that the Christian city, if a Christian city had really existed, coexisted with the classical one and the spaces interacted with each other's. This affects both the city of the living (particularly the quarters of Ortigia and Neapolis) and of the dead. In the latter case it acted on Acradina, which was full of private and community cemeter-

ies. The discovery of materials has not always provided precise information on the actual ideological roots and the new creed penetration depth into the social fabric of the populace (Agnello 1990, 108-109).

The movement of evangelization follows consuetudinary itineraries: if it frequently came from the East (from the Syrian-Palestinian area), this is the reason why the eastern and southeastern part of Sicily have obviously given back a considerable archaeological documentation of early Christianity. Now it is possible to deal with the history of Christianity in Sicily without depending on the presumed apostolic origin of several churches and establishing a foundation hierarchy within them (Pricoco 1987, 11-12; see also Agnello 1957b). But all the results in the field of ecclesiastical history, hagiography and christianization of urban and suburban space in Sicily must take account of the chronology of monumental evidences found in the city of Syracuse, which never lead up to the 3rd century.

According to the topographical development, inscriptions and other artifacts it is reasonable to assert that the origin of the cemeteries of Vigna Cassia and Santa Lucia are datable to the first half of the 3rd century, whereas the cemetery of San Giovanni cannot prescind from the atmosphere of toleration signed by the Peace of the Church under Constantine (313).

Switching now to the catacomb of San Giovanni, it is clear that its ancient appellation is not known, since, unlike Roman catacombs, it does not present any trace of dedication to one or several martyrs. The catacomb has borrowed its name from the title of the adjacent basilica of San Giovanni Evangelista dating to Norman age.



ANTIQUARIAN STUDIES

Before the research carried out by Francesco Saverio Cavallari and Paolo Orsi in the second half of the nineteenth century, the "underground roads" of San Giovanni's catacomb have been explored several times by scholars recorded in mortifying and ungenerous ways as local erudite scholars. The information deducible from Sicilian antiquarian studies, occasional in the seventeenth century (Giuseppe Bonanni and Vincenzo Mirabella), more regular in the eighteenth (Cesare Caetani and Saverio Landolina among many) and the first half of the nineteenth centuries, joined and corrected the accounts of foreign travellers in the island (von Riedesel, Brydone, Houel, Vivant De Non and others).

In 1613, Mirabella, proposing the first plan of the catacomb **(Fig. 8)**, warned the reader that it is not "the whole perfect cave, as by then it would be impossible, given that 7many roads have been shut off by material fallen from the openings above, through which the light entered all over the underground"(MIRABELLA 1613, 38). About a decade later, Bonanni added just a few things: "As Mirabella describes them with care and draws a plan of them, I do not observe anything else" (BONANNI 1624, 64).

After Georg Walther's Sicilian experience (GUALTIERI 1624), in the eighteenth century it was up to Cesare Gaetani count of Torre to inherit the works of the three scholars mentioned above, whose works meanwhile have been reprinted in 1717 with the title *Delle Antiche Siracuse*. This incontrovertibly proves that at those times no new works had been published.

"It is Count Cesare of Torre… to point out decisively the Christian nature of the catacombs (GARANA 1961, 27). In actual fact Cesare Gaetani count of Torre approached the investigation of catacombs and their inscriptions with evident

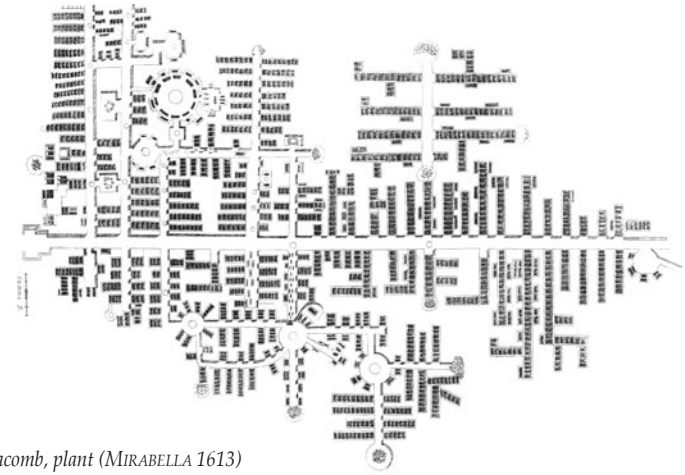


Fig. 8 – Catacomb, plant (MIRABELLA 1613)

disorientation. Gaetani promoted more than a century apart campaigns of excavation in the catacombs in 1749, 1753 and 1756. In his interest in funerary inscriptions as well, Gaetani inherited his own time difficulty in determining whether these documents were pertinent to pagan epigraphy or Christian epigraphy, privileging the more striking and distinctive marks such as the *adprecatio* to the Manes or the Christogram, but ignoring terms and formulae of the Christian message, still enshrouded – not only for him – in a thick nebulosity. The innovative contribution of Gaetani's studies must be looked for in his undoubted exploratory capacities, intuition about the anteriority of aqueducts compared to the catacombs and theorizing the idea of hydraulic pre-existences exploitation in the genesis and development of organized cemetery spaces in the subsoil, which anticipates the type of research that will be in vogue once more just as it was in the last twenty years of the twentieth century (SGARLATA 1996, 84-86).

Not all Gaetani's positions concerning the catacombs will be resumed by his successors, Giuseppe Logoteta, Saverio Landolina and Giuseppe Maria Capodieci, whose debt to the count is definitely higher than it is commonly believed. Their works clearly show that for quite a while they continued to discuss chronology and nature of Syracuse subterranean cemeteries, which have continuously come to the fore on the occasion of new discoveries both in the city and the whole Sicily. Even if Logoteta, Landolina and Capodieci were not regarded as plagiaristic, it is undisputed that Gaetani's *Vestigj di Siracusa Antica Illustrati*, though structured like the seventeenth and first half of the eighteenth centuries' guides, has a primacy, if only chronological, compared to the ones that flourished between the century the author lived and the successive one.

In the first half of the nineteenth century a stalemate had been reached, which not only failed to encourage any progress in the studies of Syracusan monuments, particularly the catacombs, but also exacerbated scholars' minds and did not create an idyllic atmosphere. However a new plan of the catacomb had been recorded in the work of the duke of Serradifalco, which he dedicated to "Sicilian Antiques", and this certainly traced more approximately than Mirabella's (SERRADIFALCO 1834, IV, plate 12). It is not a case that Francesco di Paola Avolio wrote twice under a pseudonym, to reveal several underground operations, otherwise destined to remain secret. Avolio wrote an epistolary work under the false name of the Arcadian shepherd Alcimio Titanio, to tell of both the times and the ways in which Capodieci gained possession of Gaetani's works, emphasizing how Landolina's palsy and Logoteta's early death inaugurated a moment of great creativity for Capodieci, "who awaited that occasion like the eels on the way down to the sea" (AVOLIO 1814, 11-13).

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

After Syracusan scholars' studies on the nature of their finds in the first half of the nineteenth century, it is in the second half of the century that the archaeological research gets to the heart of the matter, facing the results of the first archaeological campaigns carried out within Syracuse catacombs. The thought flies to Francesco Saverio Cavallari, head of the Antichità e Belle Arti of Syracuse, who in 1872 discovered the sarcophagus of Adelfia in the homonymous rotunda, in the southern region of the catacomb **(Plate II)**. Cavallari, likening the place that the sarcophagus has been found to "a large Niche in the shape of a Church apse with a semi-cylindrical vault", gives a detailed breakdown of his intervention in the rotunda and particularly in the monumental *arcosolium* structures (Cavallari 1872, 24).

It is only with Paolo Orsi that the research on the catacomb of San Giovanni became scientific and whoever is going to study this monument, will not prescind from his studies anymore. It is just Orsi who makes the major contribution to the comprehension of Syracuse and its territory in prehistoric, Proto-historic, Archaic, Classical, Hellenistic and Roman ages over forty years of activity as superintendent. Between 1893 and 1909 the archaeologist carried out a series of campaigns in the catacomb of San Giovanni, from the northern region up to the southern, after a long break in the final part of the main gallery (known as *decumanus maximus*). Detailed reports of those campaigns are recorded at various times in *Notizie degli Scavi* (see the Bibliography), which constitute an indefeasible starting point. The first incisive studies on Christian subterranean Sicily pertain to Joseph Führer, who dedicates many pages to the catacomb of San Giovanni, whose study is also epigraphic, is based on the previous literature, especially on Paolo Orsi's discoveries (Führer 1897, 13-39; Führer-Schultze 1907, 22-26; see also Orsi 1893, 276, n. 2 and Schultze 1882, 60-61, fig. 5). In the study of Syracuse cemeteries Orsi (Orsi 1900a, 189) was the first to see the mixed nature of the burials and their materials (mostly gravestones), openly attesting a kind of pagan-Christian and orthodox-heterodox symbioses, which subsequently Santi Luigi Agnello studied and defined more clearly (Agnello 1957a, 242-243). Both Antonio Ferrua and Santi Luigi Agnello within the space of a few years tried to solve the problems relating to the sarcophagus of Adelfia and the more general problem, strictly correlated with the ones just mentioned, of the cemetery genesis and development (Ferrua 1952 and Agnello 1956).

Santi Luigi Agnello, from February 8th to May 25th 1988, as the inspector of Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology for eastern Sicily catacombs, conducted some works of cleaning out in several sectors of San Gio-

vanni catacomb (Agnello 1994, 661), whose outcomes were collected by Marc Griesheimer, in order to provide an overall reading of the cemetery genesis and topographical development (Griesheimer 1989). Two different interventions were carried out in the rotunda of Adelfia: the first one, along with other interventions in 1988, was in the area in front of the large niche, where the sarcophagus has been found; the second one in the month of July 1993, in the smaller *arcosolium* directly opposite the large niche, locatable in the plan **(Plate II)** immediately to the left of the entrance to the rotunda from the gallery *i*, which connects the rotunda of Adelfia with the Marina one (both the interventions are reported in Sgarlata 1996 with a proposal of a new interpretation).

THE ITINERARY IN THE CATACOMB

Following in Paolo Orsi's footsteps

The visit to the catacomb of San Giovanni does not entail an unmethodical journey, since it aims to follow in the footsteps of the great archaeologist Paolo Orsi, reconstructing an ideal itinerary on the basis of the numerous excavations campaigns in the catacomb; so the journey will start from the northern region, carry on along the middle and final section of the main gallery and finish in the southern region.

Just as in Roman catacombs, but with a bigger monumentality, the project involves realizing a regular urban plan for the subterranean city of the dead. Walking across the main path **(Fig. 9)**, it is possible to notice that it used the route of a classical age aqueduct, whose traces are all along the main gallery **(Figs. 10, 11)**. In the catacombs, indeed, the exploitation of pre-existent hydraulic structures is not unusual: aqueducts, private channels, circular section well and conical or bell-shaped cisterns (Tolotti 1977 and 1980; Collin Bouffier 1987). The same happens in the catacomb of San Giovanni, with the diversity due to a well-defined project; in several cases the *fossores* (gravediggers) were forced to demolish or amputate the cisterns that, because of their position, influenced the

Fig. 9 – Decumanus maximus, *from the entrance*

construction of the regular structure according to the project. It is feasible to see numerous cases of hydraulic installations reuse, which facilitated the realization of galleries, *lucernaria* (skylights) and private chambers.

It is necessary to record that numerous hypotheses on the genesis and development of the various sectors of the cemetery are ascribable to the account given by inscriptions. Syracuse, thanks to its prolific underground cemeteries, has the larger Christian epigraphic heritage after Rome, kept in the storage of the Soprintendenza di Siracusa.

The catacomb of San Giovanni has been created for a community that no longer needed to hide its Christian faith and the monument itself, with its architectural grandiosity, proves it; creating a cemetery of such dimensions, which is not confirmed by the 3rd century more labyrinthine cemeteries of Rome (Fiocchi Nicolai 1998) when persecutions had yet not decreased, it is conceivable just in the atmosphere of tolerance towards Christianity, as ratified in the Peace of the Church (313 CE). This cemetery is commonly dated in the following way: foundation after the Peace of the Church, utilization during the 4th and 5th centuries, abandonment in the first decades of the 6th century, as confirmed by inscriptions relating to Goths (in Sicily between 491 and 535). The types of tomb are standard (Nuzzo 2000): *loculi* (rectangular cavities with a visible long side) closed off by tiles, marble slabs and bricks bearing an inscription **(Fig. 12)**. A type of burial, more ornate than the *loculus*, is the *arcosolium*, a sarcophagus-like tomb hewn out of the rock, horizontally closed by a *tabula* called *mensa*, with a square or arched niche above. The *arcosolium* usually housed two bodies, but could contain more than two burials or, as it occurred in Syracuse, about twenty burials. In the subterranean cemetery also the *forma* can be found, which is the ordinary tomb cut in the soil in open-air necropolises; the *fossa* tomb is typical in the phases of intensive use and exploitation of catacombs, when the lack of space induced the faithful to use the floor of the galleries and *cubicula* (private chambers) as well. As it can be easily assumed, it is not rare that tombs dug into the floor preceded the realization of new *arcosolia*. The matter makes sense, considering that a believer could ask the permission to be buried close to one's relatives, interred in the *arcosolium* several years before, and accept a less noble solution in order to be reunited with one's own dear departed ones.

Fig. 10 – Decumanus maximus, *aqueduct*

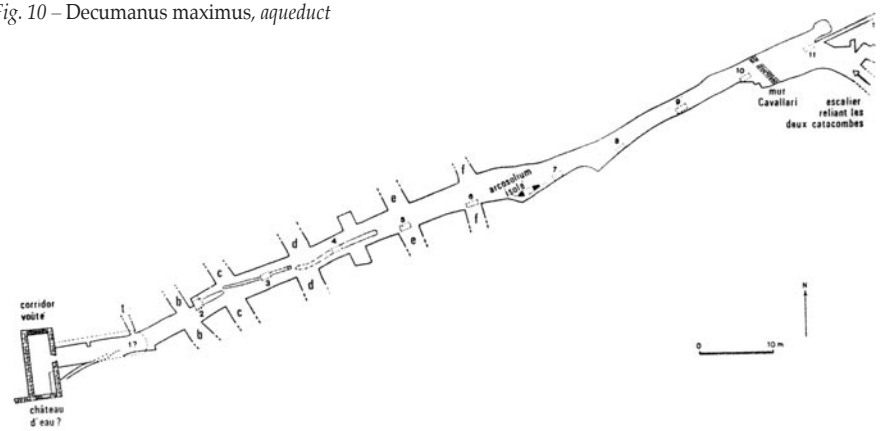


Fig. 11 – Decumanus maximus, *aqueduct layout (Griesheimer 1989)*

Fig. 12 – Decumanus maximus, *loculi cut in the walls*

Fig. 13 – Second northern gallery, "Sepulchre of the Saint"

The northern region

Walking across the main gallery, over the tombs dug into the soil and covered, so that it is possible to continue on one's way, one can retrace the stages of Paolo Orsi's interventions, being at the entrance of the Catacomb second northern gallery, before the so-called "tomb of the Saint" **(Fig. 13)**. This *arcosolium* is considered a privileged burial on the basis of the following reasons: most of all because of its position, but also because it is *a mensa* type burial closed by a sole slab (**Fig. 14** from Orsi 1893, 292-294). The signs of an ancient rite are easily traceable on the slab, a rite that preceded the coming of Christianity and persisted for centuries up to the present day: the rite of *refrigerium,* which literally means refreshment, cooling (Giuntella 1985). In the Christian ceremony the purpose of a funeral banquet is to benefit the soul of the departed on the anniversary of death, a painful event celebrated as *dies natalis* of the soul to eternal life. The living console themselves, pouring the loved one wine, milk, honey and other things through the holes of the closing slab; the excavations data reported in Orsi's papers (Orsi 1893, 293) reveal the presence of a bronze small pipe in the Saint's tomb, which connected one of the holes with the deceased's mouth. A banquet after the funerary ceremony is still a practice in several regions, even though this may be done in different ways.

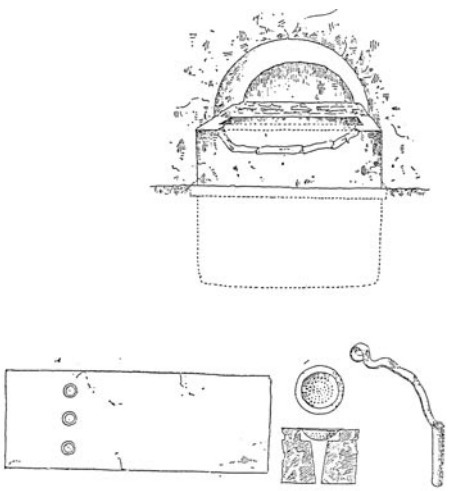


Fig. 14 – Second northern gallery, "Sepulchre of the Saint", reconstruction

Who was buried in this sepulchre? The question is destined to remain unanswered and only an inscription found nearby could be a clue in this sense. The text says that the owners purchased the sepulchre close to the one of the bishop Cheperion's (Orsi 1895, 507-508), of whom the scanty written sources never make mention. Is Cheperion the corrupted form of the name Cyprian attested in the literary sources? In any case this constructed sarcophagus represent one of the most eminent burials of the catacomb, even if the owner's name and the affiliation either to the Church (member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy) or the Empire (official for the administration of the province of Sicily) are not known. In the same gallery one cannot ignore the finding of an inscription in many fragments, which is a singular phenomenon of religious contamination. This inscription, with a Christological monogram at the top, records Nassiana "Christian, who competed with Penelope in moral virtue" **(Fig. 15)**. This inscription can only be compared with three examples in the Roman sepulchral *carmina* (Bücheler 1897). The circular support of this inscription found close to the "tomb of the Saint" has been regarded as a *mensa* (table) for *refrigerium* rite (Giuntella 1985, 47), whose circular form would derive in any case from an evident reuse of a marble disk of classical craftsmanship, with a laurel wreath and berries sculpted on one side (Orsi 1895, n. 234). A wall inscription painted on the extrados of an *arcosolium* in the third northern gallery of the catacomb could be connected with Nassiana's text. Two lines of the inscription say that "Sossa outdid (other women) in conjugal love; as for handiworks, without being taught by anyone, Athena herself had taught her how to do marvellous things" (Ferrua 1940, n. 3). Both inscriptions unequivocally make use of female figures from the classical world, interpreted as a model also for Christian women either for a deep-rooted usage or making up for the absence of assimilable figures in the Church. This allows one to notice in a 4th century large community cemetery, such as San Giovanni, some phenomena of religious contamination in a period in which Christian epigraphic praxis consolidated itself by then (Sgarlata 1999, 484).

Fig.15 – Second northern gallery, Inscription of Nassiana (Museo Archeologico Regionale "P. Orsi")

Walking across the same gallery, before turning right to go into the trapezoidal *cubiculum* (A), it is possible to check what has been said earlier about the *fossores*' attitude toward the hydraulic pre-existences. In front of another private chamber half of the cistern comes out and has been partially cut to keep the regularity of the gallery pattern, in accordance with the planning stage for the project. Along with this, there are other solutions that imply the

reuse of previous age structures in order to create new private spaces. Getting into the *cubiculum* A **(Fig. 16)**, one can see the remains of a bell-shaped cistern, which was not a cue for creating a chamber, but on the contrary it has been intentionally ignored by the gravediggers; its decentralization demonstrates, if still needed, the strict adherence to the initial project, which did not permit any dispensation but in the cases – traceable in the southern region of the catacomb – where pre-existences seconded and did not modify the development of the project. Syracuse gravediggers' technical ability deserves more than a mention: laborers through the centuries accustomed to work in the quarry (the suggestive Latomie in the city clearly show it, since these quarries have provided for centuries the materials to build both the temples and other buildings) became diggers of subterranean cemeteries. It is in the architectural solutions that Christian subterranean Syracuse keeps the pace with Christian Rome and sometimes surpasses it, whereas painting, sculpture and monumental epigraphy compare unfavourably with Roman testimonies. The journey into the gallery of the cemetery shows traces of poor paintings on the walls. These paintings, empty of figurative scenes, use simple bands or grids – the latter allusive to the paradisiac garden – to personalize some *arcosolia*. The iconography of paradisiac *habitat*, so present in catacomb paintings (Bisconti 1990), proposes a series of recognizable variations.

Fig. 16 – Decumanus minor, Cubiculum A

The rotunda of Antiochia

Walking along the second main gallery (called *decumanus minor* in Orsi 1895, 516 since it has, even though shorter, the same orientation as the *decumanus maximus*), named the gallery of the pious Giovanni **(Fig. 17)** because of an inscription that records the deceased Giovanni of blessed memory (Orsi 1907, 758 and 1909, 761-762, fig. 19) – given the poverty of the tombstone, it cannot be the reason of the catacomb denomination –, one can stand in front of a sarcophagus hewn out of the rock and later on cut to emphasize the entrance to one of the most important private chambers of the cemetery, the rotunda of Antiochia.

It is a real *pantheon* created in the subsurface. One can enter the rotunda using the staircase, as a prelude to the monumentality of the private space. The lighting allows people to see along both the staircase walls the unequivocal traces of a columns series surmounted by capitals in ancient times **(Fig. 18)**. One must have recourse to imagination to notice the colonnade that lined the staircase and eventually continued inside the mausoleum **(Fig. 19)**. Here the traces of columns and capitals are much weaker, so that you could think of a lesser compactness of the rock, evidently rec-

Fig. 17 – Decumanus minor, *from the entrance*

Fig. 18 – Rotunda of Antiochia, entrance colonnade, left side

Fig. 19 – Rotunda of Antiochia, overall view

ognizable on a side of the vault and being the only explanation for the non-realization of *cubicula* to the north, has prejudiced the execution of the original project. But, even though the original project had been seen through to completion – as it happens in the graphic reconstruction of the rotunda (from Tomasello 1996, 150, fig. 8) –, it remains firm that geomorphologic conditions, however, have prevented the extension of the catacomb in the northern sector. This mausoleum shows, obviously inside, the same scansion of columns that are frequently noticeable on the external perimeter of the central planned buildings above ground (**Fig. 20** from Tomasello 1996, 151, fig. 9). Other architectural solutions, in debt to the classical tradition, often appear in San Giovanni as they do in other catacombs. In the rotunda of Antiochia, for instance, to the right of the entrance, an *arcosolium* in the shape of an exedra can be signaled, which is characterized by a terracing arrangement of the burials **(Fig. 21)**. This confirms both the architects' scenographic intentions and the adoption of common models in subterranean cemeteries, given that similar solutions can be detected in Naples and Sabratha in Libya (Fasola 1975, 49 figs. 32-34 and Nestori 1973, plate VII).

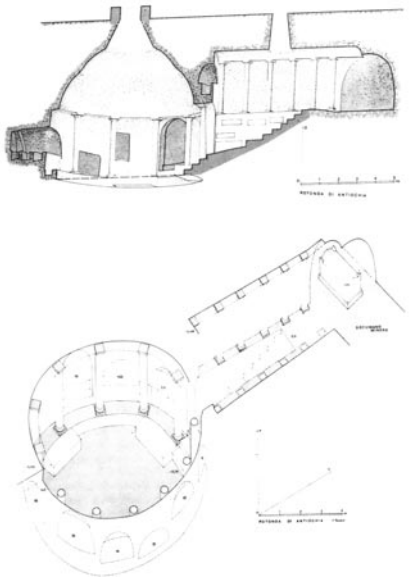


Fig. 20 – Rotunda of Antiochia, reconstruction hypothesis (Tomasello 1996)

Fig. 21 – Rotunda of Antiochia, exedra-like arcosolium

The rotunda derives its name from the deceased Antiochia recorded in the sarcophagus, set inside the ring of tombs, made of blocks and bearing an engraved and rubricated inscription. Whom did this private space belong to? To answer the question, one can rely on a suggestion provided once more by epigraphic testimonies. The gravestones found – on which they put as a rule the deceased's name, lifespan, date of death and deposition – according to the first excavators' reports (Carini 1873, 23-45), attest that the rotunda of Antiochia could have housed women only and this would give credence to the idea that the mausoleum had been used for a female monastic community. The hypothesis needs to be verified, but it is very seductive.

Fig. 22 – Fourth northern gallery, arcosolium *with multiple depositions*

It is evident that the catacomb of San Giovanni was originally a community cemetery, planned for only one type of burial: the *arcosolium* with multiple depositions (**Fig. 22**; see *supra*, 22), which does not require great care for decoration (bands of paintings and openwork marble enclosures, called transennae). In the topographical and architectural development of the catacomb it appears clear that creating the rotundas breaks up the common burials series, destined to a socially homogeneous Christian community. These changes to the original plan – of the creation of subterranean mausolea both to the north and south of the cemetery – spring from the necessity to create appropriate spaces for the members of the Chruch and above all of the Empire, bringing into question the initial egalitarian choice of the *arcosolium* burials (Griesheimer 1989, 767). In the terminal part of the pious Giovanni's gallery a monumental sarcophagus, once more hewn out of the rock, can be perceived. Close to the closing wall of the same gallery an inscription was found: it bears the notification of both the consuls of the year 349 (Orsi 1909, 756, 8; Agnello 1953, 89). As a rule this date marks the end of the dig works in this sector of the catacomb (Ferrua 1952, 75-76).

After a brief passage, you are ready to walk along the third northern gallery, where, on the front wall of the first *arcosolium* on the left, the remains of two peacocks flanking a *kantharos* traditionally full of water can be noticed; going ahead, on the right, several fragments of the inscription painted on the wall already mentioned can be detected, which records the qualities and merit of a deceased, whose name is Sossa (see *supra*, 43-44).

The eastern region

At the boundary of the third northern gallery, turning left, one can enter the main gallery again. Looking up, some parts of the aqueduct are visible. It appears rather clearly that in this sector the catacomb is spread over two levels, favoured by the pre-existence of some cisterns. Where the fourth northern gallery opens out, a cistern can be easily detected, partially coated with hydraulic mortar yet, laid out over a second level and intercepted during the excavations of the catacomb. Another example of reuse is an isolated *arcosolium*, one more time made using the aqueduct structures **(Fig. 23)** and reserved for only one important burial, supposedly belonging to a Syracusan virgin (Orsi 1896, 55-57). The term "supposedly" has been used since, as it will be observed, the wall shows all the signs of a palimpsest, a superimposition of paintings and painted or scratched inscriptions, which do not facilitate the individuation of the original owner of this sepulchre **(Fig. 24)**. One thing is certain: the deceased is not Adeodata nor Deodata. This name is not recorded in the text of the epigraph and has been erroneously attributed to

Fig. 23 – Arcosolium *of the Syracusan virgin, aqueduct*

Fig. 24 – Arcosolium *of the Syracusan virgin, frontal view*

Fig. 25 – Arcosolium *of the Syracusan virgin, Christ along with the deceased*

the deceased because of Führer's apograph (Führer 1896 and 1897, 811-812). The protective restoration promoted by the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology in 1996 was an inescapable choice, given the precarious state of preservation of the *arcosolium*, reported by Orsi already in 1896 (Orsi 1896, 55-57). In the upper panel of the first pictorial stratum the salvation of the soul has been approached. One can distinguish: a) scattered vegetation, which emerges when the second stratum of paintings does not cover the first one; b) in the middle, remains of a carved and rubricated inscription inside a laurel wreath of difficult interpretation, whose *ordinatio* phase is easily seen; c) on the left side the remains of a peacock tail, which could have recurred specularly on the other side (Bisconti 1998, 37-40). The decoration of the lower panel bears a false marble slab composition, which presents in a funerary hypogeum context the same decorative solutions as in the above ground architecture of the previous centuries. The second pictorial stratum of the upper panel, within a wide band frame, is decorated with images of Peter-deceased-Christ-Paul, according to the iconography of the deceased entering heaven (Ahlqvist 1995, 105-114). Amid isolated letters, monograms and the well emphasized *alpha* and *omega*, which mean that Christ is the beginning and the end of all things, Christ is caught in the act of crowning the deceased.

Fig. 26 – Arcosolium *of the Syracusan virgin, inscription before the restoration*

Fig. 27 – Arcosolium *of the Syracusan virgin, inscription after the restoration*

This is a solemn act, which usually refers to martyrdom, but in this case does not find any justification in the written text added to the pictorial one. The identification of the two apostles is not accepted by all the scholars (Bisconti 2000, 155-156). While they were restoring the *arcosolium*, several repaints were seen in diverse parts, especially on both the figures of Christ and the deceased **(Fig. 25)**. The lower panel bears the monumental inscription – edited many times (see also Wessel 1939, 379) – in 8 lines, painted within a large band frame **(Figs. 26, 27)** and gradually vanished. In this sense Ferrua's words attest that: "the big red letters…unfortunately are part vanished, part veiled by a thick layer of damp, dust and calcareous infiltrations" (Ferrua 1940, 67). The dedicator of the inscription is the brother Siracosio, as recorded in the penultimate line, led to the light by the deceased, whose name still can be completed with difficulty. It is not possible to see any trace of Führer's Adeodata or Wessel's Dorotea, whereas it is unmistakable that the woman has been a *parthenos*. Even if the lacunae do not allow her to be qualified as a consecrated virgin or not, the tone of the text seems to confirm it. In the intrados, in the middle, a laurel wreath with the monogram ☧ between *alpha* and *omega* can be recognized; on either side are two symmetrical compositions consisting of a *kantharos*, from which three laurel wreaths branch off, interlacing. Giuseppe Agnello dated the first stratum to the second half of the 4th century and the second stratum to the first half of the 5th century (Agnello 1952b, 30). On the basis of the most recent iconographical studies, I think that its dating needs to be reconsidered.

The pictorial decoration of an *arcosolium* lunette to the right of the central gallery is worthy of a mention, most of all for the theme chosen, which is unusual in catacomb ambient: Madonna (or mother?) with the infant Jesus, on either side of whom two Christological monograms between the *alpha* and *omega*, within two considerable circles, stand out (Ahlqvist 1995, 115-117; Bisconti 1987, 306) **(Fig. 28)**. Among a series of drawings dedicated to the main frescoes of the catacomb (Agnello 1992), there is a paint made by Salvatore Politi in 1859. Except the trellis-work decoration and the monogram in the mid of the antepenultimate *arcosolium* extrados on the right, once more allusive to the paradisiacal garden **(Fig. 29)**, the latest pictorial testimony of the main gallery belongs to its terminal stretch, a few meters before the wall built

Fig. 28 – Decumanus maximus, *Madonna with the infant Jesus*

Fig. 29 – Decumanus maximus, arcosolium *with trellis-work decoration*

by Francesco Saverio Cavallari to separate the catacomb of San Giovanni from the catacomb of the Predio Maltese (Agnello 1976b). Orsi called the *arcosolium* "Pompeian" (Orsi 1896, 54), influenced by the wall painting style attested in Pompeii three centuries before, in which wreaths and tendrils were usually used as a decorative element, which filled empty spaces among the painted scenes. Some themes (such as the hare or some birds), very dear to that zoomorphic symbolism so present in early Christian paintings (Bisconti – de Maria 1988), were represented within intricate decorative textures. On the lunette of the small *arcosolium* hewn out of the big one, on the left wall, an orant figure, flanked by two birds, in the *expansis manibus* gesture occurs **(Fig. 30)**, according to the canonical scheme of Roman cemetery paintings. There is a wealth of literature on both the orant figure and the Good Shepherd. Their representation is very frequent in the catacomb on the one hand, but is debated on the other. It is plain, for the interpretation of the gesture, that it is "opportune not to move away from the idea of prayer", hymn and praise to the Lord (Bisconti 2000, 236).

In one of the fossa tombs at the terminal stretch of the main gallery the inscription of Euterpe (*IG* XIV, 112) has been found, reused to cover the bottom of the tomb, which traditionally marks the end of the dig works of the catacomb (Ferrua 1952, 75-76; Agnello 1958, 79; Griesheimer 1989, 781). Beyond the deceased's biometric data, recorded as "companion of the Muses", the epigraph in the last three lines mentions the consuls' iteration, which allow us to date back to the consulate of the Emperor Constantius, consul for the tenth time, and Julian-Caesar, consul for the third time. So Euterpe died on November 27th 360 A.D. at the age of 22 years and 3 months (Guarducci 1978, 524-526).

After three more *arcosolia* a retaining wall, wanted by Cavallari to restrain any possible landslide, separates the main gallery from its 8 m latest stretch; here one can perceive again the aqueduct that runs, physically and ideally, all along the main gallery. The aqueduct at the eastern boundary of the catacomb has the same original aspect as at the western entrance (Orsi 1907, 775). On the right of the aqueduct "an upward flight of stairs led to a ground level gallery, which, according to all the clues, faced the unexplored cemetery of Villa Landolina"; Orsi reminds us that he got them "to close off the end of the flight with a solid massive wall after the sixth step" (Orsi 1909, 349). Only after 1975 when so massive wall was blown down and a first intervention was arranged, geared both to knowing and reclaiming the cemetery that in successive literature will be referred to as the "catacomb of the Predio Maltese" (Agnello 1976b).

Fig. 30 – Decumanus maximus, *Pompeian* arcosolium, *detail*

The southern region

Walking backward along the main gallery one can enter the second walkable gallery on the left side, which houses a large cistern and leads to the southern region of the catacomb. It is in this region, more than in other ones, that you can note the transformations that have profoundly undermined its community spirit, which had originally inspired the creation of the catacomb. Once you have gone through the first hairpin bend **(Fig. 31)**, you find yourself, almost unexpectedly, in the first rotunda of the southern region **(Fig. 32)**, a private space, which was given the name of Marina due to an inscription scratched upon the extrados of the *arcosolium*, on the right of the entrance to the short gallery of the bishop Siracosio. The *arcosolium* seems to be enframed by a painted prothyrum, as the still visible column and capital attest **(Fig. 33)**, confirming the generalized use of architectural elements in this catacomb, already seen in the rotunda of Antiochia. According to the most recent interpretation of the text, Marina could have been the wife of the *patricius et magister militum Sabinianus*, sent by the Emperor Honorius to Spain at the time of barbarian invasions presumably between 409 and 423 (Ferrua 1989, 21-22, 40). These

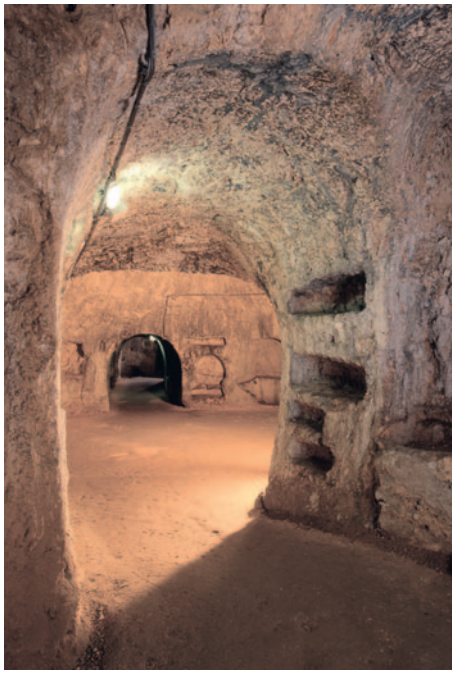


Fig. 31 – Rotunda of Marina, entrance with hairpin bend

Fig. 32 – Rotunda of Marina, overall view

testimonies are ascribable to the years of the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius in the first quarter of the 5th century and seem to suggest a link between a few burials of the southern region and the aristocrats' diaspora from Rome after Alaricus' advance in 410, who took refuge in Sicily and Africa as they did in other provinces of the Empire (Sirago 1989, 175; Vera 1988, 157-158). In the rotunda of Marina one can instantly distinguish an opening to draw water, which must have belonged to the original plumbing system. This stresses puzzlements about the genesis of this rotunda like the other two in line on the plant **(Plate II)**. It only remains to make a choice between two possible explanations: 1) it is a case of a *pantheon* constructed *ex novo* on the pattern of the mausolea above ground, as the rotunda of Antiochia in the northern region, to suit both the local and passing members of the elite, without any influence imposed by preexistent hydraulic structures (Griesheimer 1989, 764); 2) the rotundas reuse hydraulic preexistences and adapt them to a private vision of the space. In this case the presence of previous structures (cisterns of large dimensions), probably increased even further and whose undeniable traces remain (openings for drawing water and inspection pit with platforms) and have been the input for creating subterranean mausolea (Sgarlata 1996, 81-83). The alignment of the three rotundas would be, in this sense, related to their original utilization from above (for the system of the lined cisterns in Syracuse see Collin Bouffier 1987, fig. 3), more than the alignment of the roads and neighbouring hypogea (Griesheimer 1989, 763). The former explanation for the genesis of this sector does not convince, mostly because of the idea of an adjustment of the alignment of the three rotundas with a nearby road, 350 m away from the catacomb, identifiable with a late mending of the supposed *via lata perpetua* (see *supra*, 9), which served the theater area. A comparison with the alignment of neighbouring hypogea, accessible through their own direct staircases and, as such, in necessary relation to the road network, is not proposable for the mau-

Fig. 33 – Rotunda of Marina, homonymous arcosolium

solea of the catacomb, since they are not in immediate relation with the above ground. The same central thread seems to link the three rotundas – of Marina, Adelfia and sarcophagi – to the solution adopted in the catacomb called "Grotta di Fragapane" in Agrigento (Führer-Schultze 1907, 205-215, fig. 75), where pre-existent granaries develop into circular chambers. Before examining the rotunda of Adelfia, it is necessary to have a look at the slab of the presumed *arcosolium* of the bishop Siracosio, AGNELLO **(Fig. 34)**, recorded in one inscription found in an adjacent fossa tomb, which says that the deceased intentionally purchased the sepulchre close to the one of the bishop just mentioned (IG XIV, 123: Ἐνθάδε κῖτε Πολυχ / ρόνιος καὶ Σεραπία. / Ἠγόρασεν τῷ τότ / ε καιρῷ / Πολυχρονίου / αἱ Σεραπία ἐπὶ τῷ κυρί / ῳ μου ἐπισκόπῳ Συρα / κοσίῳ). It is just a hypothesis seeing in the *arcosolium* with the engraved slab, still *in situ*, a noble burial for a member of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, for whom, in the absence of other data, according to a letter of pope Gelasius I, an episcopate between 492 and 496 has been proposed (Narciso 1952, 223). One can clearly distinguish a Christogram with the apocalyptic letters *alpha* and *omega* and two ships in the shape of fish, regarded as making reference to the sacrament of the Eucharist, this is also suggested by the diskettes next to the fishes' mouths, assimilable to loaves of bread (Agnello 1952, 64-68).

Fig. 34 – Presumed arcosolium *of the bishop Siracosio*

The rotunda of Adelfia

You can go back to the rotunda of Marina, only to walk along the gallery *i* that leads to the second rotunda, named after Adelfia, and to note that, in this case too, a second hairpin bend leads to the rotunda, creating an unexpected outcome, already seen in the other rotunda, which instantly sets the visitor in front of the large niche (nicchione) **(Fig. 35)**. So you can get close to the big sarcophagus that housed the burial of a senatorial rank woman, the wife of a high official in the imperial court. This burial is one of the few double register sarcophagi known in the ancient Christian world (see Appendix II) **(Fig. 58)**. After reading the text of the inscription upon the sarcophagus lid (*CIL* X, 7123: *Ic Adelfia c(larissima) f(emina) / posita conpar / Baleri comitis*) **(Fig. 69)**, one can become aware that it refers only to the woman, not to both husband and wife: here lies *Adelfia, clarissima femina*, wife of the count *Valerius*. Who were therefore *Valerius* and *Adelfia*? The unsolved enigmas of the catacomb of San Giovanni deal with their names and most of all their identification.

It is just some testimonies made in the soil **(Fig. 36)**, before the works of cleaning out in 1988 covered by the ground, that legitimises a new reading of the main monumental arrangement of the rotunda of Adelfia, the one connected with the interment of the famous sarcophagus (Sgarlata 1996). In line with it, a new lighting system within the rotunda has provided a regular legibility to the walls of a private funerary space, whose history looks like a palimpsest of diverse stories that little by little made the relative literature pluristratified and, in some ways, up to now unsolved. It is not easy to find one's way in so dense a history of scholarship and select what still can be of

Fig. 35 – Rotunda of Adelfia, overall view

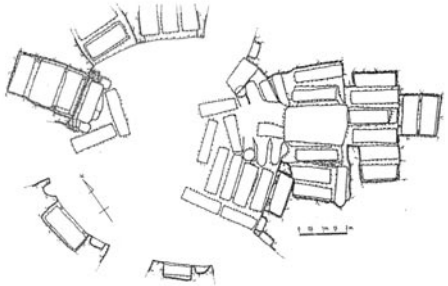


Fig. 36 – Rotunda of Adelfia, plant

use to the scholar, especially in the light of the results from historical and archaeological research. Neither the rotunda of Antiochia, nor the one of the sarcophagi, nor the *cubiculum* of Eusebio, just to mention the most significant examples of monumentalized spaces in the catacomb, can boast the same treatment as the rotunda of Antiochia. What has been said on the one hand puts the scholar in a privileged point of view, on the other hand perturbs him, since he has to face a bumper crop of data, some of which, still not decoded, come from unreliable or alleged local sources (I am referring to the small galaxy of publications, born from the sensation caused by the discovery of the sarcophagus, mentioned in the overall Bibliography; for a critical list of the first studies on both the rotunda and sarcophagus see STRAZZULLA 1896, 13-14, 43). The rehabilitation of these studies, through the filter of one analysis that expunges the twists and slips of many authors of local histories, appears more binding than ever, in order to understand a monument that time has steadily pared down (FERRUA 1952, 55). Also the information deducible from Sicilian antiquarian writings needs to be reassessed. These writings were episodic in the seventeenth century, more intense in the eighteenth and first half of nineteenth centuries, joined and corrected the testimonies of the foreign travellers in the island (DE NON 1785; HOUEL 1785; SWINBURNE 1786). The reconstruction of the history of the rotunda cannot prescind from the reassessment of the antiquarian writings, especially of the ones that were contemporaneous with the discovery of the sarcophagus, as already said, in 1872, or came after it. Cavallari's report is of crucial importance, since it accurately marks the diverse phases of the artifact discovery, and also providing a detailed report of the interventions carried out in the structures of the monumental *arcosolium* (CAVALLARI 1872, 24-25).

The assimilation of the large niche (nicchione) to an apse became a constant from de Rossi's paper (DE ROSSI 1872, 81) – lacking in details since it does not deal with his usual Roman research – and Carini, who paid more attention to epigraphic testimonies (CARINI 1890, 17); Arezzo (in FERRUA 1952, 61, n. 12) and Privitera (1872, 4-5) described the inside arrangement of the apse as a sepulchre-altar – that is, indeed, the way it appeared to the discoverer – , borrowing the term from de Rossi. Their insistence on this emerging structure in the shape of an altar built upon the large slabs that cover the graves that house the sarcophagus is not a surprise. Obviously, it has to do with an experience that is not only rooted in the catacomb of San Giovanni, since there are plenty of subterranean cemeteries with sepulchre-altars within apsidal niches (FASOLA – FIOCCHI NICOLAI 1989, 1188).

It is certainly difficult to scientifically study the rotunda of Adelfia, known and excavated down the centuries before, analyzing excavation data and materials; as it happens in other cases, reconstruction and chronology of the diverse phases will be assigned to the evidence of a compromised monument, but still capable of providing several suggestions. Consequently one has to drop the idea of reconstructing the dynamics of the events on the basis of a strictly archaeological approach, recreating the history of the monument through all the available information (SGARLATA 1996, 83). The interpretation of the rotunda enhances some words of Cavallari's report, which have gained a precise sense only after the deep cleaning of the ground in front of the large niche (nicchione) opening.

The data on the large niche demonstrate that the privatization of the sector dedicated to the burial of Adelfia in the rotunda is not contemporaneous with the creation of a subterranean mausoleum, which, in its original organization, was already designed to distinguish itself ideologically from the rest of the catacomb. If the space for the insertion of the sarcophagus has been obtained demolishing a part of two preexistent graves – clearly visible on either side of the hole dug to house the artefact – and dismantling completely the central one (FERRUA 1952, 58-60, fig. 1), the distinction of a succeeding phase of intervention within the large niche (nicchione) becomes an accepted and incontrovertible datum **(Fig. 37)**.

Fig. 37 – Rotunda of Adelfia, large niche (nicchione), hollows in the walls

In reality it is possible to distinguish more than two phases of intervention, which have preceded the creation of the hole for the sarcophagus. At the beginning the internal space of the large niche was scenographically arranged in a terrace pattern with a forceful ascensional effect, not exempt from

comparisons (Nestori 1973, 14, plate VII), whereas the two groups of three graves dug into the ground opposite and adapted to the shape of the large niche opening – so they are posterior to it – seem to be of a later period. The intact Latin inscription of *Sporus*, dated to 356, which sealed a *forma* in the main gallery among the ones that join the rotunda of Marina to the one of Adelfia (Cavallari 1872, 24; Agnello 1953, 90), would attest that the exploitation of the soil in the area gravitating to the rotunda of Adelfia was already underway after the first half of the 4th century, so confirming the evident anteriority of the six graves cut in the floor to the phase of monumentalization. Both the internal and the external organizations of the large niche (nicchione) would correspond to the first and second phases of intervention respectively, according to the reconstruction above proposed. The problems related to the reconstruction of the third phase seem to be more complicated, since the most drastic alterations made to the large niche can be attributed in succession to this phase, not to the previous ones; the monumentalization phase started with the interment of the sarcophagus and concluded with the acquisition of an aspect comparable to the privileged burials of Roman crypts. Between the two extremes several transformations are inserted, still readable, since they have been produced by interventions on the rock in negative, so not adding masonry structures, of which no trace remains in the rotunda, with the exception of both the remains of the "a cassa" tomb leaning on the *arcosolium* and the repairing within the large niche (nicchione). The first modification has been the dismantlement of the three graves on the most advanced level of the large niche, which has already been mentioned, whereas the second one affects the two external walls, which, at the very opening of the deep sarcophagus, show at a height of 2,10 m off the ground two profound hollows on the rock, 40 cm wide on average, clearly symmetrical. Ferrua interpreted the two cavities as the housing for the extremes of an architrave, which closed the monumental *arcosolium* with a transenna (Ferrua 1952, 60). The new interventions of the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology on the ground in front of the large niche opening have dug up, after an oblivion of more than a hundred years, two cavities of the same diameter (cm 42) **(Figs. 38, 39)**, which suggest a different function for the two hollows on the wall, not necessarily geared to house a transenna that closed the *arcosolium*. The external graves, in a third phase, were affected by the creation of the two pits a and b. The connection between soil cavities and hollows on the wall seems to be inevitable and makes plausible the hypothesis of a trabeation not limited to a horizontal development within the large niche (the transenna), but advanced towards the center of the rotunda, assuming the likeness of a real prothyrum. In this reconstruction the two cavities would have housed two columns that bore an architrave not unlike the one that has been recognized in the west *arcosolium* of the Quattro Coronati's *cubiculum* 54 in the Roman cemetery complex "ad duas lauros", which Guyon associated with a transformation phase due to the interment of the sarcophagus in the *arcosolium* (Guyon 1987, 429-431, Plate 9, figs. 83 and 243). Although with extreme caution, one cannot help noticing that the two cavities seem to have been designed to carry an architrave and give Adelfia's burial place the face of a sepulchre-altar, which Cavallari, along with those who managed to recover the sarcophagus (Arezzo, Carini and Privitera mentioned above), stressed. The final intervention of the third phase would be, in this way, the continuous trabeation laid upon the columns and holes on either side of the large niche walls. Thus the architraved structure would emphasize the monumental arrangement overhanging the sarcophagus buried in the wide hole in the ground and circumscribe below a space marked off by a possible enclosure provided with a transenna (see de Rossi 1877, 229-238, plate IA; Fiocchi Nicolai 1992, 41-58, fig. 27).

Fig. 38 – Rotunda of Adelfia, large niche (nicchione), pit a

Fig. 39 – Rotunda of Adelfia, large niche (nicchione), pit b

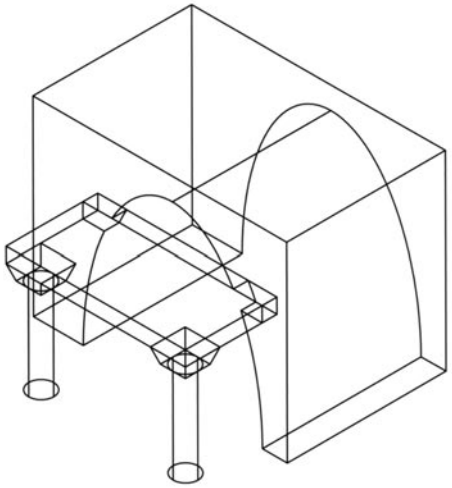


Fig. 40 – Rotunda of Adelfia, large niche (nicchione), reconstruction hypothesis

Even without the transenna, the reconstruction hypothesis gives the large niche the appearance of a ciborium-altar's back **(Fig. 40)** and can be supported by the analysis of the alterations that, presumably in the same period, were made in one of the *arcosolia* of the rotunda, which previously must not have been dissimilar to the other ones in the cemetery. The excavation of a tomb cut in the soil in front of it preceded the monumental transformation of the *arcosolium*, which, for the solutions taken, coincide with the third phase of Adelfia's large niche. The frontal view of the anonymous *arcosolium* **(Fig. 41)** shows that the decorative scheme is completely lost now in the superstructures, but still readable without a shadow of a doubt in the traces left on the rock. One can read the marks of mortar used to fix the shaft columns – later removed – to the external walls of the *arcosolium*. As one can read, it seems that the cavities (cm 22 x 18) are meant to house the posterior portion of the two capitals, secured to the holes with metal staples, one of which survives still intact. The two holes above the capitals, which are functional to fix an architrave placed on the two columns, can be regarded as housing of brackets, as security of a greater stability for all the trabeation. Following the perimeter marked by the mortar, shown in the plant in dotted lines, one can conjecture the presence of a structure that must have included a central lunette. Losing the marble epigraph, which must have covered the front of the *arcosolium*, still decipherable in its lower part, marked out in a bold line in the front reconstruction, irreparably compromises the possibility to investigate the identity of the privileged burial's occupants. The ideal graphic restitution of the front and section **(Figs. 42, 43)** finds extraordinary analogies in the monumental arrangements, referable to pope Damasus (366-384), of several venerated tombs in the *Spelunca Magna* in the cemetery of Pretestato (tomb of San Gennaro in Tolotti 1977, 58-71, fig. 29) and in "ad duas lauros" (tomb of SS. Marcellino e Pietro in Guyon 1987, 384-385, fig. 224) **(Fig. 44)**. For both the *arcosolia* the shift from the third phase to the last one cannot be but dictated by a traumatic event,

Fig. 41 – Rotunda of Adelfia, anonymous arcosolium

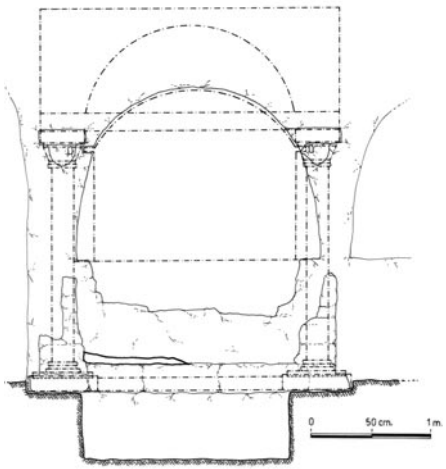


Fig. 42 – Anonymous arcosolium, *front*

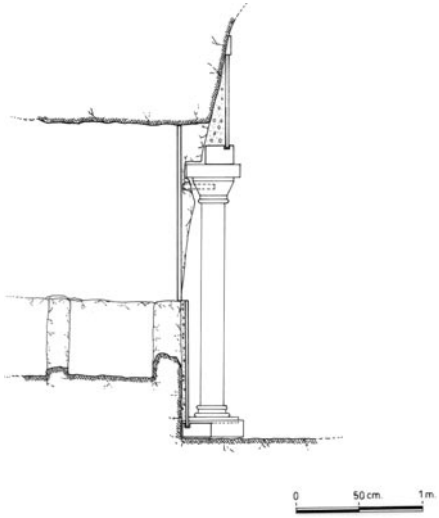


Fig. 43 – Anonymous arcosolium, *seen in section*

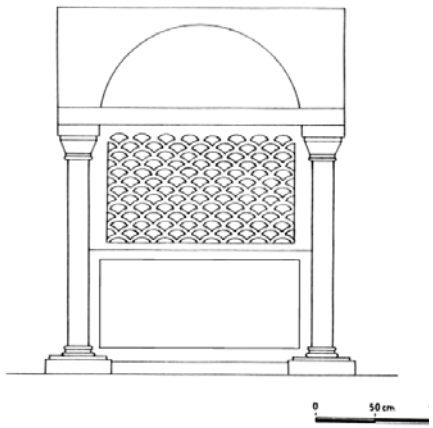


Fig. 44 – Anonymous arcosolium, *graphic reconstruction*

since only a violent excision of architectural elements can justify it. The intensive exploitation of the rotunda's ground, started in coherent ways during the second phase with the creation of aligned floor tombs and developed into a disorganic pile of *formae* arranged in diverse orientations, comes to an end in the fourth phase. For the anonymous *arcosolium* it is obvious the construction of a masonry sepulchre, whose blocks were laid close to the wall just on the socle of the third phase, probably provided with the typical equipment of the *a mensa* tombs, a "calcareous slab crossed by a biconical hole" found in the adjoining gallery *i* (Orsi 1895, 491).

The traditional chronology (the sarcophagus has been dated about 330: Agnello 1956 and Griesheimer 1989) is not enough to explain the diverse phases shown in the two most important *arcosolia* of the rotunda of Adelfia. If 313 CE has to be assumed as a point of departure for the creation of a cemetery of such dimensions, conceivable only in the climate of toleration ratified by the Peace of the Church and if the years 325-330 CE – under the governorship of *Lucius Aradius Valerius Proculus Populonius*, the probable husband of Adelfia – represents an unappellable proof for the chronology of the sarcophagus, the difficulty of compressing the history of the creation of the rotunda and the adjustments made in the large niche between these two chronological extremes becomes macroscopic. The different phases, indeed, spanned over about fifteen years: 1) project; 2) beginning of the works and their development, at least, up to the part that leads to the southern sector; 3) alterations on the original project, born according to community criteria, but differently developed under the pressure of the governing class; 4) creation of the rotundas; 5) and 6) first and second phases of the large niche arrangement; 7) third phase of monumental transformation due to the interment of the sarcophagus.

The monument seems to have a less wild internal dynamics of development; the new data (archaeological, historical, epigraphical) (Sgarlata 1996, 101-108) allow the scholars to widen the syncopated weave of temporal sequences, to which the analysis of the monument has been pinned by the constant reference to *Valerius Proculus*' chronology. A new chronology and a different identification of the *comes Valerius* can be proposed, considering: 1) the evident reuse of the sarcophagus (see Appendix II); 2) the topographical development of the catacomb in the area where the sarcophagus has been discovered; 3) the type of monumental intervention, which followed the Roman counterparts, datable to the second half of the 4th century (Fiocchi Nicolai 1997, 132-134). If *Valerius* were given a different identity, one could postpone him from the age of Constantine to that of Augustine (Sgarlata 1998a, 15-51), on the basis of several accounts about the friendship between the saint from Hippo and a *comes Valerius*, whose physiognomy, is somewhat vague. This friendship, confirmed by the epistles (Aug., *Ep.* 200, 206, 207; *Retr.* II, 79 and 88) and the dedication, in 419, of the treatise *De nuptiis et concupiscentia*, is fed on the fight against Pelagianism, which in eastern Sicily had found a fertile soil. The presence of Pelagians in Sicily is attested for certain, according to *Hilarius*' account under the pontificate of Innocent (Pietri 2001, 429-452) and *Honoreficentia*'s letter, where a *clarissima* based at Syracuse is mentioned. On the island the spread of Pelagian movement looks like a direct consequence of the 410 sacking of Rome and the diaspora of the Roman nobility, of which Pelagius and Celestius were spiritual leaders; the short period they both spent in Sicily was not painless for Christian orthodoxy (Pietri 2001, 436-437) and particularly in Syracuse, as the cemeteries in the area overhanging the Greek theater, intended to serve the communities of the so-called heretics throughout the 5th century (Agnello 1990). All the data gathered seems to lead to a different identification of *Valerius* – who, even if he was not Augustine's correspondent, would be sought in the list of *Valerii* reported in the sources of the first quarter of the 5th century (PLRE II, 1143-44) – and a later chronology of the large niche monumental transformation compared to the one traditionally accepted. The vitality of the southern region in the first quarter of the 5th century, on the other hand, is confirmed by the identification of *Marina*'s wife in that *Sabinianus*, who lived at the time of Honorius (see *supra*, 31).

In regard to the two *arcosolia* of the rotunda on examination, everything traces back to the monumental arrangements attested in Roman catacombs under the pontificate of Damasus, which take root in Syracuse unsurprisingly late. But everything, at the same time, shows that Syracuse is a long way from Rome. If in the Urbs the Church commissioned everything, in Syracuse it does not happen. If the imitations in Latium – *e. g.*, among them all, San Senatore in Albano Laziale (Fiocchi Nicolai 1992, 41-58, fig. 27) – inherit the sacred nature of these transformations reserved to martyrs' sepulchres from Roman prototypes, Syracuse ones do not inherit ideologically, at least in Adelfia's burial, the Damasian inheritance, as if the aristocracy, far from Rome, but so numerous in the catacomb of San Giovanni, wanted to secure a fitting burial, in the same way the ecclesiastical hierarchy commissioned its own at Rome. Certainly it is not the case that in this catacomb the traces of the members of ecclesiastical hierarchy are so rare: where are the martyrs? Why is the evidence of bishops, presbyters and deacons so scant? Why is this Christianized elite – to which the will to betray the communal matrix of the

original project for a new particularistic conception of funerary space can be attributed – so copious?

To answer the questions will take time, which will assure a greater credibility to what so far seems just a series of suggestions, most of all fed by the re-reading of epigraphic testimonies: the episodic character of the references to burials of bishops, presbyters, deacons and noting that the most significant percentage of evidences pertains to the members of the Church, buried in Syracuse away from their own countries and recorded in wall inscriptions written in Latin – *Auxentius Hispanus episcopus* and *Superianus clerecus de Aquileia* (Ferrua 1940, 1 and 6) – as a demonstration that the official language is used by foreigners, who were high clients (the remainder of inscriptions is in Greek), these and many other clues lead to thinking of a less incisive control of the Church in the 5th century than one can commonly believe.

Fig. 45 – Rotunda of the sarcophagi, overall view

The rotunda of the sarcophagi

From the rotunda of Adelfia, through a passageway ending at a right angle, which is reminiscence of the hairpin bends adopted for the entrance into the two rotundas seen above, you get to the rotunda of the sarcophagi, or of the virgins **(Fig. 45)**, characterized by the presence of seven sarcophagus boxes, entirely hewn out of the rock, oriented north-east/south-west (Orsi 1896, 346-349; see Schultze 1882, 291-293). Cavallari (1875, 81) carried out the first survey and the first, real, clearing in the rotunda, however they are present in the plant drawn up by Mirabella (1613; see *supra*, **Fig. 8**). To the left of the entrance one can distinguish an inspection pit with platforms, well preserved, which must have belonged to the water supply system of the Greek city, brought to attention many times in diverse sectors of the catacomb, and could be linked to the presence of a small dimensioned cistern whose walking level had to be originally higher **(Figs. 46, 47)**; only in this way the hypothesis of a pre-existent cistern could live with the presence of sarcophagi hewn out of the rock. All the sarcophagi, except one with a molded profile above, are typologically homogeneous, not unlike the others indicated in the northern region of the catacomb **(Fig. 48)**; they were probably covered by a double sloped lid with acroteria (see Orsi 1904, 287; Marchese 1996, 187) or, more monumentally, a baldachin made of movable architectural elements, utilizing noble materials, removed later on (Sgarlata 2003, 108-111). The arrangement of the sarcophagi is not conditioned by the accesses of the other two ambulatories

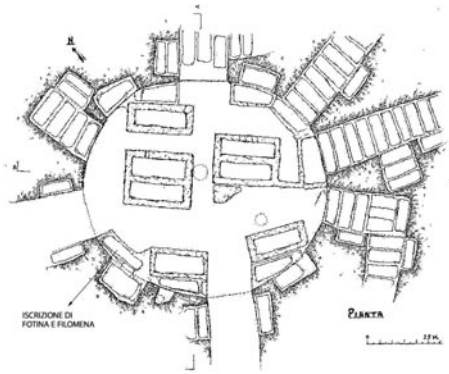


Fig. 46 – Rotunda of the sarcophagi, plant

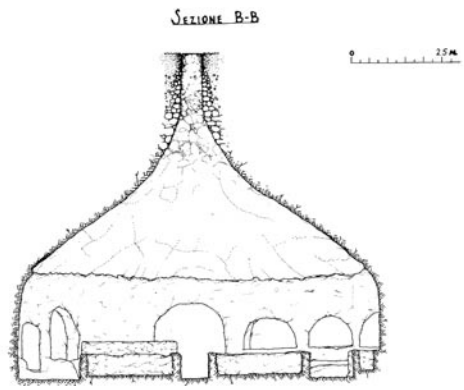


Fig. 47 – Rotunda of the sarcophagi, seen in section

open onto the rotunda, which proves that the ambulatories were not planned when the *pantheon* was created, but only afterward (Mandolfo 1997, 55). The gallery in line with the entrance, named *p*, has in the third *arcosolium* to the left one of the most singular pictorial representation of the catacomb **(Fig. 49)**.

What is surprising is the concentration of monumental burials, so that one can think members of the Church commissioned the works here too. What clues are the that could support the hypothesis that the clients belonged to a religious community? To tell the truth, they are scant and among them the epigraph of the blessed virgins Fotina and Filomena deserves to be recorded: the former lived 80 years, the latter 84 (*IG* XIV, 187; Ferrua 1989, 180). Such a long lifespan, for the centuries under examination, finds a justification only in considering that both the women chose a monastic-type life, avoiding the slow attrition due to diverse factors: precocious age weddings, consecutive childbirths since their early adolescence, abortive practices by makeshift means and, lastly, even after the dangerous age of 25/30, the overwork that household management and hygienic-sanitary conditions involve. The biometric data recorded in the inscriptions (Etienne 1959), confirmed in Syracusan sample as well (Sgarlata 1991), testify that life expectancy at birth, considering the high rates of infant mortality, was not over 30 years on average, both for men and women; this datum is not surprising, if one bears in mind that the average span life was about 45 years still in the first half of the nineteenth century.

Leaving the rotunda of the sarcophagi without revealing the secret of its clients and, walking through the rotunda of Adelfia, one can head to the last sector of one's own subterranean journey.

Fig. 48 – Rotunda of the sarcophagi, view from the gallery p

Fig. 49 – Arcosolium *of the gallery* p, *reclined deceased*

The *cubiculum* of Eusebio

Before entering the *cubiculum* of Eusebio, it is necessary to look towards the *cubiculum* G, to the left side, which, for its monumental arrangement, must have housed a special burial **(Fig. 50)**; this space – like the other *cubicula* of the catacomb (*e.g.* the *cubicula* open onto the gallery of the pious Giovanni) – from the entrance, presents itself as private, because of two quadrangular holes and two horizontal hollows seen by the door-posts, which suggest the presence of an original closing door. The sole dated inscription found within this chamber, which is related to the name of Eucarpio, bearing the notification of both the consuls between 339 and 360 (Ferrua 1983, 3), cannot be used for dating; the discovery data, insisting on the fact that the gravestone was found overturned in a *forma* tomb (Agnello 1960, 30-31), suggest that the gravestone was reused.

The *cubiculum* of Eusebio has a structure different than other private spaces of the southern region of the catacomb **(Fig. 51)**, but however it seems drawn from the widening of a pre-existent cistern, of which some traces remain in the hydraulic mortar that cover the wall at the same height of the skylight (Orsi 1895, 512-518). The entrance to the last private space of the catacomb **(Fig. 52)** takes place slantingly compared to the connection passageway and the non-symmetry in the door-posts of the entrance was probably "determined by the presence of an unexpected hydraulic structure existing before the creation of the catacomb" (Galletta 1997, 59-60) and, maybe, it

Fig. 50 – Cubiculum *of Paulus, from the entrance*

Fig. 51 – Cubiculum *of Eusebio, overall view*

could be suggested that it was determined too by the will of recreating a surprise sensation that has characterized the entrance to all the monumentalized spaces of the southern region. The maintenance pit with platforms, heritage of pre-existent hydraulic structures, is placed within the pier of the entrance arch to the left; a circumscribed drilling has shown that the pit continues under the walking level of the gallery. The name Eusebio derives, once more, from an inscription found on a three level monumental tomb, in the shape of exedra, visible to the left of the *cubiculum* (*IG* XIV, 111) **(Fig. 53)**. The first burial, laid out at 30 cm from the walking level, presents a masonry front made of reused materials, amongst these is a calcareous slab, 55 cm long and 6,5 cm thick. The position and monumentality of the grand *arcosolium*, the formula "of blessed memory", the paleographical characters, the identity of pope Eusebius month of death (exiled to Sicily by Maxentius, Eusebius died on 17 August 309 or 310) have suggested to Isidoro Carini that this *arcosolium* could be the pontiff's temporary sepulchre, whose bones were transferred to Rome and deposited in the catacomb of Callisto. Despite the scholar's efforts to sustain this theory (Carini 1873, 134), the physiognomic contours of Eusebius recorded in the inscription remain hazy. Above the sarcophagus dug at the second level of the terrace, one can get the inkling of a five lines wall inscription with red lines within a frame. In the 1894 excavation campaign Paolo Orsi found mosaic fragments with white, red and black marble tesserae, which must have concurred to embellish the decoration of the *arcosolia* (Orsi 1895, 494); one can see several traces of red tesserae in the *arcosolium* to the right of the west ambulatory. The two monumental tombs, within a recess at a higher level with respect to the *cubiculum*, with a vaulted covering **(Fig. 54)**, are in front of the entrance. One is hewn out of the rock and the other is in a more prominent place and has been created afterwards. They both follow again the architectural and scenographic criteria that characterize and prevail in the catacomb of San Giovanni. The sarcophagus box, hewn out of the rock, presents a decoration with black and white marble slabs, whose optical effects are detectable because of several fragments still *in situ*.

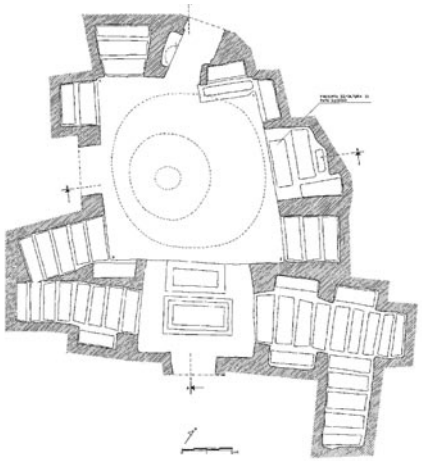


Fig. 52 – Cubiculum *of Eusebio, plant*

Fig. 53 – Cubiculum *of Eusebio, exedra-like* arcosolium

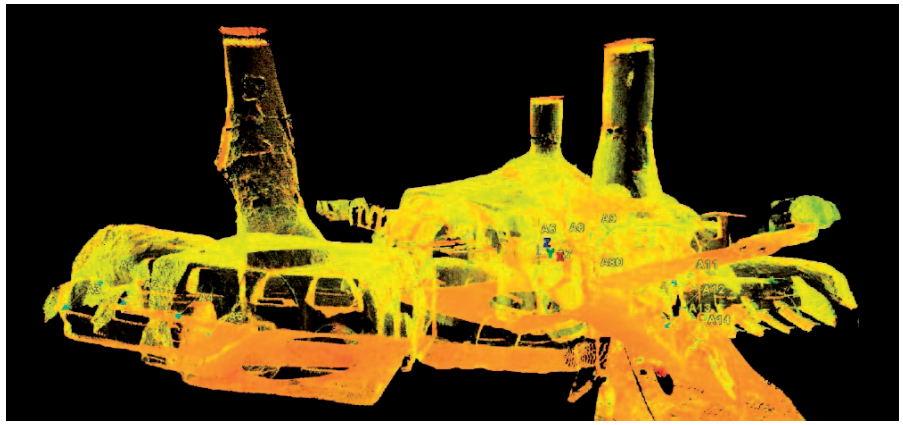


Fig. 54 – The three-dimensional model of the cubicles of Eusebius and Paulus in false RGB visualization

Beyond the two monumental tombs, a gallery leads to a *cubiculum* (H), whose characteristics are the same as the smaller *cubicula*'s ones already seen in other sectors of the catacomb **(Plate II)**. In the top west wall a *loculus*, laid at the entrance to the gallery *s*, must have originally housed a "notable" (borrowing the term from Orsi) little boy, given that its decoration is expressed by mosaic tesserae, which enframed it, and a wooden *mensa* fastened to three aligned holes, which are still visible (see Griesheimer 1992 for other evidence of this type in the northern region's *cubiculum* A). Analyzing the structures of this private space in a clockwise direction, one must look towards the gallery *s*, since recent surveys permit to dismiss the thesis – implied by Führer on the wake of Cavallari-Holm (1883, 364) and restated by others later on – that it was originally a secondary entrance to the catacomb, blocked off afterwards (Führer 1897; Amato 1950, 9-10). In reality the last stretch of the gallery *s* could hardly have been an entrance, given the fact that its architectural

Fig. 55 – Gallery s, *terminal sector*

arrangement looks like a terminal stretch **(Fig. 55);** several pieces of evidence testify it: the widening of the gallery by the last light shaft, the ceiling that has changed from flat vault to barrel vault – which creates an arch on the front – and the presence of two steps, which mark the gap between this part and the rest of the gallery. In particular if one lingers over the two steps, it will be clear that the second one is not homologous with the first one, since it has one hole on either side, which can be undoubtedly regarded as housing of two transennae, which are meant to mark off the area at the back. What did the marked off space house? It can be presumed that it probably housed a sarcophagus (Gulletta 1997, 54-57). The monumental arrangement of the large niche of Adelfia played its part in the reconstruction hypothesis **(Fig. 56)** that seems to repeat architectural solutions attested both in the catacomb of San Giovanni and other cemeteries of the ancient Christian world (see *supra*, 39; compare a homologous solution in the hypogeum of Riuzzo in Orsi 1906, 231, fig. 18). Still in the gallery *s*, on the extrados of the fifth *arcosolium* to the north, one can distinguish a bearded male figure with short hair inserted in the usual context of paradisiacal habitat, to which the rich plant decoration in the background alludes (Agnello 1952, 96).

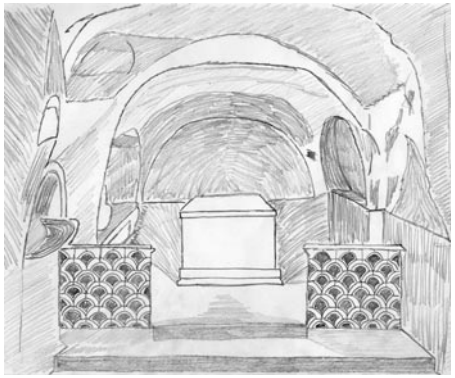


Fig. 56 – Gallery s, *reconstruction hypothesis*

The *cubiculum* of Eusebio also deserves to be recorded for another testimony, which has a special value for Syracusans: an inscription found in a *forma* tomb, which testifies the worship of Saint Lucy, the patron of Syracuse **(Appendix I)**.

The new approach to the catacomb of San Giovanni brings many things into question, such as the fideistic attitude of those, who have studied this monument and have looked at the epigraphic evidence for chronological purpose. Rereading Orsi's excavations data unequivocally shows how itinerant are the dated inscriptions within the cemetery – with the exception of three, whose discovery data attest their permanence in the original position (Orsi 1896, 43-50; 352-353; Agnello 1953, 90, 97) – which advises the scholars against using them to seal chronologically the diverse sectors. It would be profitable to draw a map of reuse, which is certainly the most striking phenomenon detected thus far in Orsi's accounts, more than continuing to date the works in the galleries on the basis of dated inscriptions found in their terminal part (see *supra*, 27 and 30). But, even underestimating this phenomenon, the inscriptions datable to the years around 350 and the ones, more considerable numerically, that bear the notifications of both the consuls between the end of the 4th century and the first half of the 5th century, have been seen both in the northern region and the southern one, as well as the main gallery (Sgarlata 1996, 109, n. 62), which excludes drawing conclusions on the internal development of the catacomb. A datum, however, is worth considering: epigraphic evidence and intense exploitation of funerary space attest the vitality of the area that gravitates around the three southern rotundas after the end of the great works of excavations. What appears episodic in the other sectors of the catacomb – for example the so-called sepulchre of the Saint (see *supra*, 21) – becomes constant in the southern region, where diverse types of intervention on pre-existent structures and high percentage of dated inscriptions demonstrate, still in the first half of the 5th century, a special concentration of interest.

Also the linguistic choice recorded in epigraphic evidence is worth considering: the inscriptions in Greek surpass by far, with a rate of about 90%, the ones in Latin. Assuming this, one could state that in Sicily religious conver-

sion is not a linguistic conversion, proving wrong the theory according to which in urban centers Christianization would bring along an early diffusion of Latin, whereas the *pagus*, keeping the use of Greek, would keep its distance from Christianity, at least until the early 5th century, during which signs of both linguistic and religious conversion would become a little more evident (MANGANARO 1993, 545). Epigraphic documentation records, for Syracuse and its territory, as for Catania, a marked preponderance of the use of Greek still in the 5th century; so in urban centers Christianization does not bring an early diffusion of Latin, which was prerogative of high and foreign clients, as only the use of Greek in the *pagus* does not prove the extraneousness to the process of diffusion of the new creed still at the beginning of the 5th century. The idea according to which "several signs of religious dissidence, in the 5th and 6th centuries, can be recognized only in peripheral rural areas, where the level of ecclesiastical control was slack. In these centuries conventional superstitions were slowly relegated to periphery" (CRACCO RUGGINI 1998, 256) needs to be dampened. The cemetery of San Giovanni has subtly given back, even if in a more hidden way, several testimonies of ideological commixture, which do not distinguish it from other communal cemeteries in Syracuse, where phenomena of "religious dissidence" are more readable (SGARLATA 2003). The catacomb was created in different cultural and religious contexts (after the Peace of the Church). The cemeteries distribution (both of private and community law) and topography of funerary monuments in the suburban area of Acradina, between the 3rd and 5th centuries, reflect well a diversified situation within a few hundred meters radius. To understand that, one needs to take account of the relationship between paganism and Christianity, orthodoxy and heterodoxy (most of all for the 5th century) (MACMULLEN 1997), which is not only a Sicilian problem, even if it is strongly sensed in the island (GRECO 1999, 59).

APPENDIX I

The inscription of Euskia

One of the most precious documents discovered in the catacomb is unequivocally, the inscription of Euskia (Fig. 57), found in the cubiculum of Eusebio, in the southern region of the catacomb, which once again plays a prominent role in the discoveries. This region, as already stated above, housed most of the privileged spaces, reserved for a Christianized elite, whose requirements of distinction soon betrayed the original community project of the cemetery. No decoration, no distinctive signs characterize the modest burial of Euskia (Orsi 1895, 299-308), one of the many graves cut in the soil of the *cubiculum*, only a marble inscription that, beside the unsure layout and crowding of letters in ligature (Guarducci 1978, 526-528, fig. 164), assumes, due to its content, a special value for the history of early Christianity in Syracuse.

Εὐσκία ἡ ἄμενπτος , ζή σα<σα>
χρηστῶς καὶ σεμνῶς ἔτη
πλῖο<ν> ἔλαττον κε' , ἀνε-
παύσετο τῇ ἑορτῇ τῆς κυ-
ρίας μου Λουκίας, εἰς ἣν
οὔκ ἐστιν ἐνκώμειον
εἰπεῖν , Χρηστειανή , πισ-
τή , τέλιος οὖσα , εὐχα-
ριστοῦσα τῷ εἰδίῳ ἀν-
δρὶ πολλὰς εὐχαριστ-
τίας ⲁϫⲣⲱ εὐομε[ίλητος].

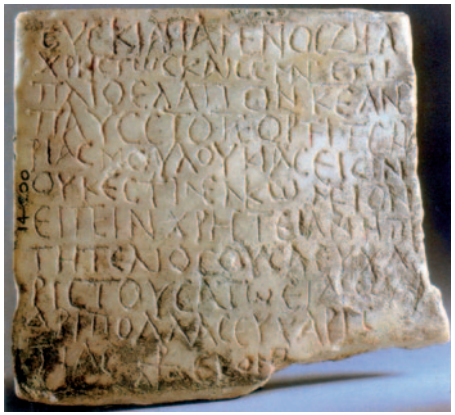


Fig. 57 – Inscription of Euskia (Museo Archeologico Regionale P. Orsi)

Euskia, the irreproachable one, who lived her life in good and pure ways for more or less twenty-five years, died on the feast of our lady Lucia, for whom no praise is adequate. She was Christian, faithful (and) perfect, well pleasing to her husband, endued with much grace, affable.

This is the text of the most important Christian epigraph in Syracuse (Agnello 1953, 20). The formulae present the typical *elogium*, the retrospective data of the life of the deceased and the Christological monogram flanked by the apocalyptic letters, which are common elements in the inscriptions of the catacombs; it is important since Euskia had been privileged to die on the same day that was sacred to Lucia, patron of Syracusans, a martyr during Diocletian persecutions on the 13th of December 304. The sole doubt of this recon-

struction lurks in the term *kyria*, which is referred to Lucia in the epigraph; does one have to interpret it as synonym of *haghia* (saint), which would assure the official character of the worship, or a simple honorary title? Whatever answer one can give, the importance of Euskia's inscription survives intact, because it testifies if not already the sanctity of Lucia, the local devotion and worship of which the woman was subject in the 5th century in Syracuse.

The *heorté* (the feast), in fact, corresponds to the *dies natalis* of Lucia; the client, presumably the husband, remembering the feast, was trying to ensure the martyr's protection of the wife, who died on the same day. The name of the deceased Euskia contrasts with the name of Loukia: the "shady one" is in contrast to the "luminous one".

In 1895 Orsi wrote: "One cannot escape the fact that the name of the deceased and the name of the saint could be related; perhaps the antithesis is not accidental, and could allude to some infirmity of eyesight, which Euskia suffered, if one does not prefer to see it figuratively, relating, *e.g.*, to the deceased's faith and religious feeling. If other material proofs were in favour of the first interpretation, which is merely hypothetical, one would have here the most ancient and precious document of the cult of Lucia as patron Saint against eye diseases; the text would be much more notable, because until further proofs to the contrary, one should consider both the account and the cult of the courageous maiden's blinding more recent, since they are not in the most ancient and authoritative acts".

So this is the first attestation of the cult of Saint Lucia, which confirms the historicity of the Martyrologium Hieronymianum's account on popular devotion to the Saint, which came through the celebration of a feast from the outset. All of the other evidence refers to successive periods: among these, the most ancient literary document that has passed on the memory of Lucia, Syracuse noble virgin, is worthy of a mention. It is the Greek *martyrion* dated to the end of the 5th century, whose reliability has been debated for a long time and to this day never evidently established (Milazzo – Rizzo Nervo 1988, 95-135).

The inscription, ascribable to the beginning of the 5th century, so would precede the questioned *passio* and would confirm the antiquity of the cult of Saint Lucia, whose bones were presumably kept in the homonymous catacomb in Syracsue, before George Maniakes, in 1039, transported them to Costantinople.

Along with the inscription of *Iulia Florentina* from Catania (Rizza 1964, 608-610), the epigraph of Euskia is the most ancient Sicilian document that one could relate to the experience of martyrdom.

APPENDIX II

The sarcophagus of Adelfia

The discovery

Fig. 58 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia

The sarcophagus of Adelfia **(Fig. 58)** was discovered on the 5th of May 1872, while Francesco Saverio Cavallari, as Direttore delle Antichità di Sicilia, was carrying out a survey in the catacomb of San Giovanni in Syracuse in order to dig up the original walking level of the necropolis, which at that time was already known for a long period of time. The discovery took place in the rotunda, which got its name from Adelfia. Despite Cavallari's awareness of being in a privileged area of the catacomb, the discovery of the sarcophagus was a complete surprise, as one can see in his very words: "As the excavations were getting closer to the large Niche, a minuscule hole let everyone know the empty space beneath those *loculi* built in the shape of an Altar, so they were certain that they found a burial of a notable personage of some kind" (Cavallari 1872, 24 – 25). After the excitement for the discovery, a bitter disappointment followed when, after removing cement and metal staples that secured the lid to the box, a few skeleton remains of a young person, who was unearthed, whose body, at the moment of deposition, was laid down on a thin lead slab, which was bent along the side. The discoverers certainly knew that they would have found the remains of only one body, since, although on the box the portrait of a married couple appears, the inscription on the lid refers to a sole deceased; disappointment comes from the absolute modesty of the deposition, which must have appeared quite inadequate, if compared to

the magnificence of the container. Some of the first commentators, incapable of resigning themselves to such simplicity, extended to suspecting – without any foundation – that the sarcophagus had already been desecrated in ancient times (PRIVITERA 1872). The discovery caused quite a stir in the city, who went in crowds to the catacomb to see the precious monument and escorted it with great pomp, when it was transferred from the catacomb to the Museum in Piazza del Duomo (now Museo Archeologico Regionale Paolo Orsi – Villa Landolina). After the enthusiasm for the discovery, a small series of publications followed. These papers, aimed at illustrating the discovery and interpreting its representations and are in some ways comparable to the modern instant books. Obviously they are of unequal value, even though they provide a wealth of information for reconstructing the context of the artefact's discovery. As precociously, however, Syracuse sarcophagus aroused international specialized press interest, which has never ceased (see BIBLIOGRAPHY).

The sarcophagus box is 0,69 m high, 0,85 wide and about 2,07 long. It is composed of two marble pieces soldered on the inside with metal staples; the staple by the anterior border made the marble particularly fragile, causing the breaking of the left side of the border and decapitation of several figures, which have been subsequently restored. The reliefs are entirely maintained, with the exception of two points in the lower register. The lid, on the contrary, is the most tortured part of the artefact: it is a reused marble slab, which on the inside has traces of a previous relief work with plant elements and birds, roughly carved in afterwards (FERRUA 1952, 58-59; AGNELLO 1956, 9-10). The sarcophagus lid measurements are noticeably smaller than the body of the sarcophagus itself (0,81 m by 2); as for the central medallion below, the inscription is decentralized of about 7 cm. The attic, which houses the inscription and friezes, is about 20 cm high and presents some chips along the lower border, with damages that affect the same figures. The right side reveals several broken points, soldered with metal staples in ancient times. The original purposes of the sarcophagus must have been set within a niche, since both the heads are not finished. When the monument was buried into the hole of the catacomb of San Giovanni, was completely covered with a rich polychromy of poor quality, whose numerous traces remain both in the upper frieze and lid. The smooth lists that delimit the friezes have a geometric decoration, whereas the figures stood out against the background animated by considerable plant motifs. Over a molded framework, which enframes the inscription, in the upper part, a Christogram along with the apocalyptic letters was painted, which today is just about visible.

The imagery

The Syracuse sarcophagus belongs to the double register sarcophagi type, with the portrait of the dead couple within a central medallion. It was made in a Roman workshop, and is dated to the late Constantinian age, due to its style, or, more generally, the second quarter of the 4th century (STUTZINGER 1982, 51, 90-92, 97, 99, 128; for the other nine sarcophagi of various provenance, all fragmentary, see DRESKEN WEILAND 1998, XIV, 8-10, plates 9, 1, 10, 1-6). On the box thirteen scenes from both the Old and New Testament follow each other, with the figures next to each other forming a sole frieze. Christians inherited the convention of the continuous frieze from pagan figurative tradition. This convention was normally used in sarcophagi with profane or mythological subjects to illustrate, in order to give an orderly illustration of the stages in the deceased's life or the succeeding moments of a mythic event. But when sculptors, between the first and the second decade of the 4th century, were working for Christian clients, they introduced the unitary frieze in the decoration of sarcophagi and a substantive change occurred: both New and Old Testament events are disposed in an apparently arbitrary manner, disregarding completely any chronological sequentiality, breaking up one of the continuous relief's ground rules of the Hellenistic-Roman tradition, the narrative one. Numerous suggestions have been put forward in order to explain the reasons for such a radical change (WEGNER 1980, 528-529, plate 18a), but in reality scholars have not yet reached a univocal stance. It is generally admitted that, at least in some cases, one could recognize a regulating principle of allegoric and typological nature in disposing or alternating the various scenes. Although the sarcophagus of Adelfia has not been the object of an analysis of this type yet, one can pin down some significant relations in the disposition of the diverse scenes. For instance, there is a clear typological relation between the first scene in the lower register, the three Hebrews from Babylonia sentenced, and the central one with the Adoration of the Magi. Obviously their connection is not just iconographic – in both the scenes three male figures in oriental dress appear – but also the antithesis between the three young Babylonians' refusal to worship a false idol and the Magi's joyful adoration of the true God is emphasized. The representations of Moses receiving the Law and Abraham's sacrifice are placed on either side of the shell in the upper register, like in other sarcophagi. It is beyond dispute that structural reasons have contributed to this disposition, since the particular iconographic scheme used for the two episodes lends itself to being naturally placed in a critical part of the frieze, given the fact that the artisans had to respect the curvilinear layout

of the medallion. However one must consider that early Christians were inclined to interpret figures and events of the Old Testament as prefigurations (or types) of figures and events of the New Testament. Abraham's sacrifice, therefore, can be regarded as a prefiguration of the Crucifixion, whereas the giving of the Law could represent the Ascension of Christ. Viewed from this perspective, disposing the two scenes on either side of the medallion can appear as the fruit of a well-meditated choice. On the contrary, considering that on the sarcophagus from Syracuse the Adoration of the Magi is represented at the base of the shell, the portrait of the dead couple is amid the three main coordinates of Christ's redemption course (his birth, passion and return to the Father).

At last, the motives thus far illustrated do not exclude – as Deichmann stated (1984, 100) – that the use of the continuous frieze was even considered significant in itself. The way the protagonists of the diverse episodes act side by side or the scenes of the Old and New Testament interpenetrate and merge into one another (for instance, it is interesting to notice that in the scene of Abraham already mentioned, the altar on which the sacrifice is to be made is over the scene of Christ healing the born blind man) can express sculptors' will of giving the impression of a unitary event, to signify that, beside the wide range of biblical events, there is only one plan of salvation.

The sarcophagus of Adelfia belongs to the period after the Peace of the Church (313), when Christian iconography, after the experimental stage of the early phases, widens considerably the biblical repertoire, fixing more or less permanently types and characters. The artisans – faced with clients that made more and more specific requests and that yet, for clear reasons, did not understand any language but the one peculiar to Roman imperial art – drew heavily on the enormous reservoir of conventional images, bending those schemes to new meanings (Bisconti 2000). In the description of the scenes in the sarcophagus, the possible pagan models that provided their scheme will be mentioned.

The sarcophagus box presents, on the whole, thirteen scenes, most of which – eight – refer to the New Testament. The image of Christ recurs nine times, including the Adoration of the Magi – where the infant Jesus is on Mary's lap – and the first scene in the upper register, which is based on Genesis, where Jesus manifests himself as Logos. As it always happens on the double register sarcophagi, Christ appears young, beardless and, like the other male figures, wears a tunic and pallium; the sole distinctive element is the hairstyle, with curly hair falling over the neck, in open contrast with the typical Constantinian hairstyle of the other figures. The scenes in the sarcophagus box do not involve particular problems of interpretation, but the ones on the lid do.

The sarcophagus box

The upper register

The front of the box presents a big valve shell in the middle, which houses the half-length portrait of a couple of spouses. The man, on the right, wears his hair short, adhering to the head, with a short fringe that comes down to the forehead, in the manner in vogue under Constantine. He wears a tunic, dalmatic and toga tabulata, and holds in his right hand a scroll, on which he lays both the forefinger and middle finger of his left hand in the *adlocutio* gesture. The woman, in tunic and palla, wears a necklace made of a row of stones between two rows of pearls and on the wrist a ribbed *armilla* with a central chasing. The head, to the left, toward the man, wears a crown made of a luxuriant tress of hair, in the elaborate hairstyle that characterizes the portrait of Constantine's mother, Elena, on coins issued in 332 AD (Agnello 1956).

Scenes (from the left):

1. *God giving work to Adam and Eve* (*Genesis 3: 16-19*).
2. *The scene of the cock* **(Fig. 60)** (*Matthew* 26:34; *Mark* 14: 30; *Luke* 22:34; *John* 13: 38). The cock represented at Peter's feet (Post 1984), in the foreground, could clearly allude to his repeated denials (before the cockcrow). Christ,

Fig. 60 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, scene of the cock

Fig. 61 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, healing of the woman with the hemorrhage

Fig. 62 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, Moses receiving the Law

with the body in front view, turns his head to Peter, raising his right hand in the *adlocutio* gesture (the three fingers outstretched can indicate the triple denial preannounced to the Apostle); in the other hand bears a scroll that qualifies him as the Master.

3. *Healing of the woman with the hemorrhage* (*Mark* 5: 25-35; *Luke* 8, 43-48) **(Fig. 61)**. The scene is presented according to the traditional iconography, based on the Roman coin type, in which the emperor appears as restorer of the rights of a province (*restitutor provinciae)*. Christ turns his head back, holds with his left hand a corner of the pallium and lays his right hand on the head of the woman portrayed in a kneeling position at his feet.
4. *Moses receiving the Law* (*Exodus* 19: 1ff.) **(Fig. 62)**. Moses is a young male figure, beardless, turned to the right. He wears shoes, a tunic and pallium, whose corner he holds in his left hand, maybe to make sure that the surcoat was not a hindrance in the ascent to the Mount Sinai, indicated by the roughness of the soil surface. The Fathers of the Church regarded Moses as figure and type of Christ. The scene of the handing over of the tablets of the Law, in particular, could be interpreted as Old Testament prefiguration of the Ascension (Weitzmann 1979, 434-435).
5. *Abraham's sacrifice* (*Genesis* 22: 1-4) **(Fig. 63)**. The scene is characteri zed, as the last one and with deliberate symmetry, by the presence of the hand of God among the clouds, in this case to stop Abraham's arm about to sacrifice his son. In patristic tradition the sacrifice of Abraham, too frequent in funerary art, was considered as a prefiguration of the Crucifixion.

Fig. 63 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, Abraham's sacrifice

Fig. 64 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, multiplication of loaves and fishes

Fig. 65 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, resurrection of the son of the widow of Naim

Fig. 66 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, the three Hebrews sentenced to the execution of being burned in the furnace

6. *Healing of the man born blind* (*John* 9: 1-41). Christ, who appears behind the altar of the previous scene, brings the scroll in his right hand and reaches out the other one to touch the eyes of the blind man with the forefinger and middle finger, certainly to put on his eyes the mixture of mud and saliva recorded in the gospel passage. Patristic sources consider the healing of the man born blind as an allusion to the sacrament of Baptism: due to baptismal grace, the faithful passes from the darkness of sin to the light.
7. *Multiplication of loaves and fishes* (*Matthew 14*: 19; 15: 36; *Mark* 6: 41; 8: 6; *Luke* 9: 16; *John* 6: 1) **(Fig. 64)**. The representation of this gospel episode in early Christian art could be interpreted as a clear allusion to the sacrament of the Eucharist. Christ, in a fontal view, outstretches his arms to consecrate the loaves and fishes, which the apostles on either side present to him.
8. *Resurrection of the son of the widow of Naim* (*Luke* 7: 12-15) **(Fig. 65)**. In the scene, not to be mistaken with the raising of Lazarus (within a funerary aedicule), one can recognize, in all likelihood, the resurrection of the son of the widow of Naim: Christ, with the scroll in his left hand raised, looks towards the small deceased and touches his head with the *virga thaumaturga.*

The lower register

1. *The three Hebrews sentenced to the execution of being burned in the furnace* (*Daniel* 3) **(Fig. 66)**. The first scene of the lower register is a paradigm of liberation from death, as the last scene, and at the same time of firmness in the faith. It is the broadest and most articulate scene of the ones presented in the sarcophagus (Carletti 1975, 81, fig. 41). The initial stage of the account about the three Hebrew boys from Babylonia is represented: Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego sentenced to be burned alive in the fiery furnace, since they refused to worship the image of gold that Nebuchadnezzar had set up.
2. *The miracle at the wedding at Cana* (*John* 2: 2-11). The scene comprises only two figures: a young apostle wrapped in the pallium turns to the right towards Christ. The miracle at Cana, due to the presence of the water and wine at the same time, was related both to Baptism and the Eucharist (Moreira Azevedo
3. *Adoration of the Magi*. This subject follows the scheme elaborated by Roman Imperial art represent the defeated Orientals that, in sign of submission, bear gifts to the victorious sovereign. In the sarcophagus the adoration of the Magi is beneath the portrait of the spouses, in a minor module compared to the other scenes. Mary, in tunic and palla, sits on a throne in profile to the left, holding the baby Jesus on her lap. The scheme of the adoration of the Magi was successful from the Constantinian age onwards, when celebrations dedicated to the Incarnation of the Word held a prominent liturgical position.
4. *Original sin* (*Genesis* 3: 1ff.). In the centre there is the tree of Good and Evil, loaded with fruits. The snake coils around the trunk and turns its head to the right, towards Eve. On the ground, a bunch of spikes is between Adam and the tree, clear prefiguration of the giving of work to Adam and Eve represented in the upper register.
5. *The entry into Jerusalem* (*Matthew* 21: 1-11) **(Fig. 67)**. The representation of the entry of Christ into Jerusalem is at the end of the lower register (Dinkler 1970, 14, 17, 22, 24, fig. 15), a subject that follows the iconographic formula of the *adventus*, the arrival of the emperor into subjects' cities. Christ moves to the right on a donkey with the right hand in the *adlocutio* gesture or – more conveniently, in this context – in benediction. The entry into Jerusalem can be regarded as an earthly prefiguration of Christ's celestial triumph: as it has been pointed out, since Constantine, Jerusalem is not only the capital of the Jews or the theater of Christ's passion, but it is, most of all, the celestial Jerusalem of Christianity: entering into Jerusalem Christ triumphs over death.

Fig. 67 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, the entry of Christ into Jerusalem

Fig. 68 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, scenes of the life of Mary

The lid

The inscription is in the central part of the sarcophagus, within a moulded frame supported on either side by a couple of winged genii, naked, with the shoulders covered by the chlamys. In the right side of the lid the scene of the adoration of the Magi occurs again, which presented according to a different iconographic scheme, along with the Nativity scene.

The decoration of the right side of the lid is undoubtedly, from the point of view of iconography, the most original part of the sarcophagus **(Fig. 68)**. If all the scenes so far examined can be easily compared with the motifs of the figurative repertoire of early Christians' funerary art, the scenes of the right side of the lid, on the contrary, are an *unicum*. On the extreme left a rock face is represented, surmounted by a colossal bearded male head, from which a spring pours out. At the feet of the spring a female figure bows. She wears only a tunic belted at the waist and stretches out the vase to draw the water. In the background a young male figure appears, looking towards the rock

face and holds out his right arm. It follows a group of three female bareheaded figures: the woman in the middle, dressed like the woman at the spring, moves to the right supported by the two mates, who turn their heads toward her. Finally, to the right a group of five women appear. They wear a tunic and palla, and have their heads veiled. The woman that sits, in frontal view, on a throne with a suppedaneum, undoubtedly occupies a prominent position. The other four women are looking at her.

Recently, an ancient exegetical perspective has found new supporters – started by the German scholar de Waal in the last century and in 1992 drawn on by E. Jastrzebowska (1992, 12-14, 27, 118-119, 176-177) –, which ascribes these images to the apocryphal cycles on the life of Mary. One must therefore emphasize that at least the first scene, the one of the spring, finds comparisons in later figurative documents, so that one can recognize the Annunciation to the Virgin by the spring as narrated in the Proto-evangelium of James (XI, 1-3), Pseudo-Matthew (IX, 1-2) and the Armenian Gospel of the Infancy (V, 1.8). The frieze would be divided into three scenes. In the first scene – the Annunciation – one can recognize the Angel, standing, and Mary, who draws water from the well in Nazareth, personified, according to a deep-rooted custom of the Hellenistic and Roman art, by a big bearded male head. It is the translation into images of the account of Pseudo-Matthew: «*And on the second day, while Mary was at the fountain to fill her pitcher, the angel of the Lord appeared to her, saying: Blessed are you, Mary, for in your womb you have prepared an habitation for the Lord. For, lo, the light from heaven shall come and dwell in you, and by means of you will shine over the whole world*».

In the second scene the Virgin, bareheaded and wearing only the tunic, is escorted by two female figures; in the last scene, finally, Mary is worshipped as Mother of Christ, seated on the throne with her head veiled. The image of the sole Mary in throne has appeared to several scholars too precocious: the sarcophagus of Adelfia, indeed, is stylistically dated to the second quarter of the 4th century, when Marian iconography had not yet started its autonomous itinerary, as it happened later on, and remained strongly conditioned by the presence of Christ. In this regard one must record that some scholars consider the lid, stylistically, more recent than the box, but there are numerous evidences that not only invite to consider both the coffin and the lid as a fruit of reuse.

The inscription and chronological problems

The inscription of three lines, incised and rubricated, is within the form of a *tabula ansata*, obtained saving the colour of the marble on a red painted background **(Fig. 69)**:

IC ADELFIA C F
POSITA CONPAR
BALERI COMITIS

(*H*)*ic Adelfia c(larissima) f(emina)* / *posita conpar* / *Baleri comitis*
Here lies Adelfia *clarissima femina* wife of the count Valerius.

Fig. 69 – Sarcophagus of Adelfia, inscription

The identification of the aristocratic client of the sarcophagus – the already mentioned Valerius, husband of the deceased – is decisive for the reconstruction of the history of the sarcophagus. As already mentioned above (see *supra* 74-95), Garana identified the *comes Balerius* with *Lucius Valerius Aradius Proculus Populonius*, *consularis Siciliae* in 325-330 (Garana 1952). Historians tried to profile this illustrious member of the senatorial family of the *Aradi* (Panciera 1987, 568), who, by roundabout means, has been regarded as the owner of the villa of Piazza Armerina (Cracco Ruggini 1980, 67-68; Wilson 1990, 142, 243, 312), attributing him with a brilliant career under Constantine, links with the ludic world of Rome, land properties in Africa and, above all, a firm adhesion to traditional pagan religion, which this family confessed at least until the mid-4th century (Vera 1983, 581-593). The surveys (1994) conducted by the Pontifical Commission for Sacred Archaeology on the soil surface in front of the large niche (nicchione) where the sarcophagus was found have permitted to reconstruct the phases before Adelfia's burial and the monumentalization phase, in which the large niche acquired a face comparable to the privileged burials of Roman crypts. As already said (see *supra*, 32-40), the monumental mutation of the large

niche caused by the interment of the sarcophagus is referable to a third phase of interventions that pushes away the chronology from the age of Constantine and his successors, if one still dates the beginning of the works for the creation of the catacomb of San Giovanni shortly after the Peace of the Church (313).

It is necessary to distinguish the chronology of the inscription from the one of the sarcophagus in order to give to the catacomb an internal development dynamic less accelerated and more in tune with the monument, transferring the identity of the *comes Balerius* from *Proculus* to another historical figure. What is also evident – and puzzling, for the time when the sarcophagus was made – was the orthographical hesitations in *ic, Adelfia* and *conpar Baleri* (PANCIERA 1987, 568, n. 85) seem to confirm it, since those hesitations would be better justified in a later period. If one excludes that Adelfia's husband lived in the first half of the 4th century, it is necessary to consider the list of the *Valerii* known in the second half of the 4th century and the 5th, following the tracks of those – before Garana's supposition – who already asserted it. The first hypothesis identifies *Balerius* with the *comes Syracusanae civitatis Valerianus*, of Theodorician age (MANGANARO 1993, 586-587); the second hypothesis turns its attention to the *comes Valerius*, correspondent of Augustine in the early decades of the 5th century (GRASSI PRIVITERA 1892, 123-126 and 129-144): in the light of the spread of the Pelagian movement in Sicily, nothing prevents to hypothesize that Augustine could have made use of the presence of *Valerius* in the island to fight the legacy left in Sicily by his biggest opponent.

What are the reasons that make this identification plausible? For the first time *Valerius* appears as *comes* – without any further specification – and *vir inlustris et religiosus* (AUG., *Ep.* 207), without the iconography of the sarcophagus contrasting with the faith of the client and seems to solve the main cruces of the matter: the religious one, because *Valerius* is recorded as a champion of conjugal fidelity in line with the dictates of Church; the chronological one, because holding the title of *comes* in the West in 421 perfectly suits the monumental arrangement of the large niche in the rotunda of Adelfia, inspired by the models created by the architects of Pope Damasus for Roman catacombs, a lesson that took root understandably late in Sicily (SGARLATA 1996, 104-106; see *supra*, 39).

If this hypothesis does not satisfy, one could turn one's attention to the other *Valerii*, who lived in the first quarter of the 5th century (PLRE II, 1143-44). They could properly perform the role of Adelfia's husband, confirming the reuse of the sarcophagus and the chronology of the monumental transformation within the rotunda of Adelfia related to it.

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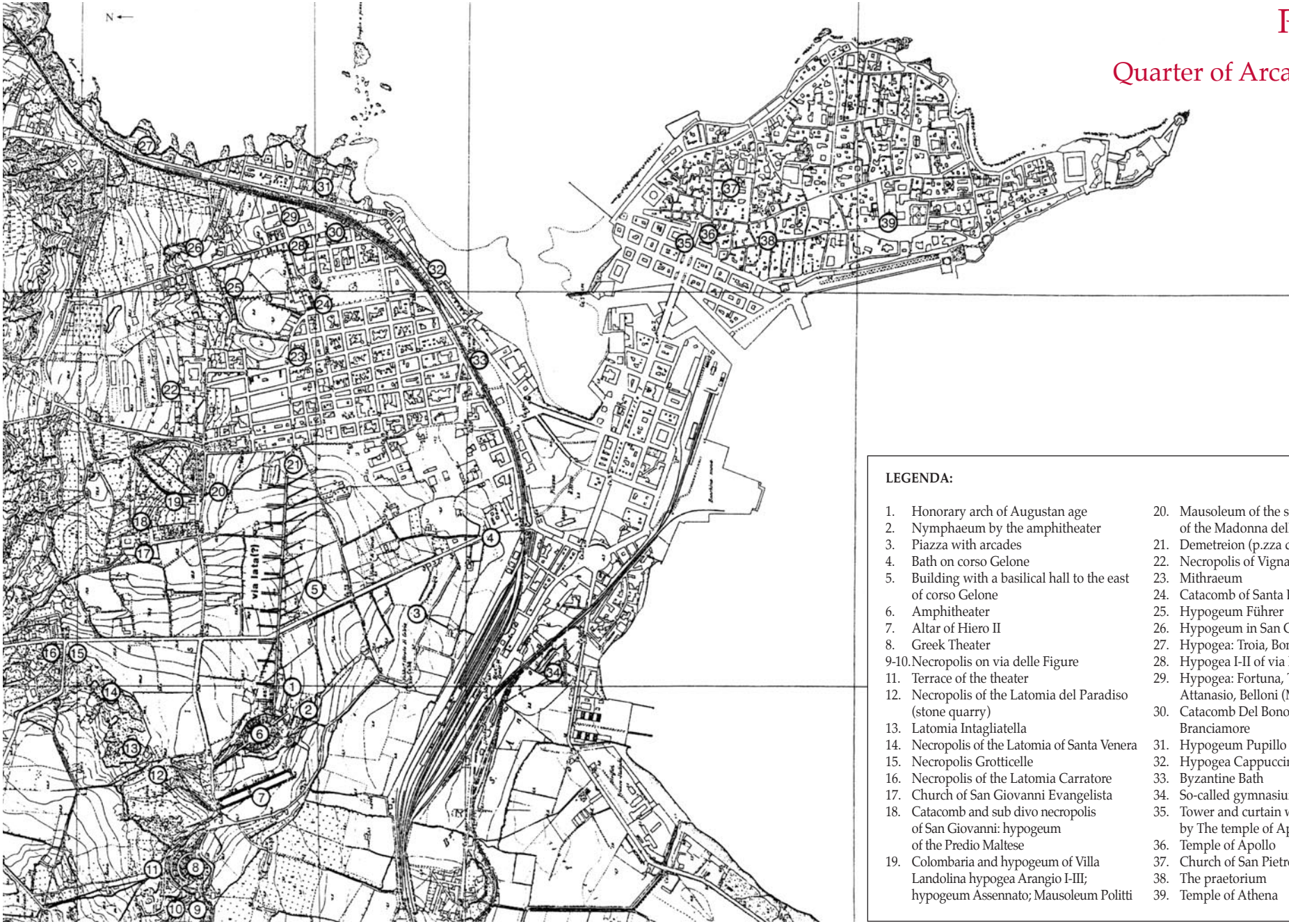
PLATE I

Quarter of Arcadia, plant



LEGENDA:

1. Honorary arch of Augustan age
2. Nymphaeum by the amphitheater
3. Piazza with arcades
4. Bath on corso Gelone
5. Building with a basilical hall to the east of corso Gelone
6. Amphitheater
7. Altar of Hiero II
8. Greek Theater

9-10. Necropolis on via delle Figure

11. Terrace of the theater
12. Necropolis of the Latomia del Paradiso (stone quarry)
13. Latomia Intagliatella
14. Necropolis of the Latomia of Santa Venera
15. Necropolis Grotticelle
16. Necropolis of the Latomia Carratore
17. Church of San Giovanni Evangelista
18. Catacomb and sub divo necropolis of San Giovanni: hypogeum of the Predio Maltese
19. Colombaria and hypogeum of Villa Landolina hypogea Arangio I-III; hypogeum Assennato; Mausoleum Politti
20. Mausoleum of the sanctuary of the Madonna delle Lacrime
21. Demetreion (p.zza della Vittoria)
22. Necropolis of Vigna Cassia
23. Mithraeum
24. Catacomb of Santa Lucia
25. Hypogeum Führer
26. Hypogeum in San Giuliano
27. Hypogea: Troia, Bonajuto, Mauceri
28. Hypogea I-II of via Mons. L. Bignami
29. Hypogea: Fortuna, Triglia, Russo, Attanasio, Belloni (Monteforte)
30. Catacomb Del Bono; hypogeum Branciamore
31. Hypogeum Pupillo
32. Hypogea Cappuccini XIII-XV
33. Byzantine Bath
34. So-called gymnasium
35. Tower and curtain wall by The temple of Apollo
36. Temple of Apollo
37. Church of San Pietro Apostolo
38. The praetorium
39. Temple of Athena

PLATE II

Catacomb, plant

(Führer 1897 – Griesheimer 1989)

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